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"Localised Creativity: A Life Span Perspective"

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Developmental Psychology

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Abstract

This thesis is based around a biographic study of the lives of 40 individuals (24 men and 16 women) with a reputation for creative work in a localised context (such as an organisation). The study examines life span development patterns from birth to middle age (45 - 60 years of age) with data gained by biographic interview and thematic analysis. Participants selected for this study are creative in that they have a reputation for producing new, novel and useful or appropriate contributions in their 'local' setting.

The study identifies two main paths to "local" creativity within this sample. First, participants who found and related to a particular area during childhood and adolescence and developed this relationship and work from that time through their adult lives. Second, participants who, although they generally demonstrated an interest in their subsequent creative work in early life did not understand this until some later time, and consequently started developing this area later. On the whole these two groups present different patterns of childhood experience, ways of locating their domain of work, association with influential adults or role models, and changes between domains and fields of work. Their midlife experiences are similar. From midlife and middle age there are fewer differences. The findings also serve to illustrate the contribution of support received from parents and teachers in early life to creative development. They also indicate that even if a young person does not identify a domain of work activity in early life this can be found later – and that support for work in this area is usually received from influential adults and role models in their work and learning environment. Various other factors have also been considered.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter:

- 1.2 Introduces the research area and questions of this thesis.
- 1.3 Considers the reasons why this is an appropriate subject for research and evaluation.
- 1.4 Describes the way in which this research is original.
- 1.5 Presents an outline structure of this thesis.

1.2 Research Area

Much of the existing research on the development of creativity over the individual life span has focused on the genius, exceptional and eminent individual – i.e. individuals defined as exceptionally creative by their peers, those who received exceptional honours, made extraordinary breakthroughs, or who had gained widespread social acknowledgement (Kastenbaum 1992: p287). This project has turned to examine the life span developmental patterns of individuals with a reputation or acknowledgement for creative output within a localised context, such as a workplace, an organisation or a region (as opposed to a national or international context, or across an entire domain of activity) from childhood, through to middle age, and up to 60 years old. In this thesis the term 'ordinary' or 'localised' creativity has been used to describe the creative output of the participants as their work has only been recognised in a localised context, as opposed to individuals who have been singled out for their peak or exceptional achievement by the public acknowledgement they have received nationally or internationally. The terms 'ordinary' and 'localised' creativity are used – to contrast with the rare, exceptional, nationally and internationally acknowledged achievement. This thesis contrasts the life span

development of these everyday and local creatives with what is known of the development of the exceptional creative individual.

This research was originally conceived to examine the impact of mid-life experiences on creativity, and the nature of subsequent changes in creative activity, if any, which may occur in the following years. The focus on 'everyday creativity' arose from exploratory empirical work (described in chapter 4) that highlighted two other issues. First, in the search for appropriate participants, people working creatively in an everyday context were more readily available than the exceptional individuals - a point made by Amabile (1996: p40). Secondly, in assessing existing research, and obtaining feedback via conference presentations there appeared little or no prior work available on the development of creativity in "ordinary" or "everyday" individuals[1] over the life span. Thirdly, from exploratory interviews conducted with participants there were strong indications that the experiences of the mid-life period, and after, could only be separated from earlier life, the development of creative activity and a career with difficulty and at the risk of losing important aspects of individuals' stories. (This view is endorsed in Whitbourne and Connolly 1999: p40.) The development of creativity is embedded in the experiences of earlier life and the experiences of the second half of life may not realistically be examined separately from this. It was in this way that this research acquired a focus on the 'whole' life span and on 'everyday creativity'.

The research method used in this work is biographic interview. The use of biographic data, obtained from published biographies and other sources, to achieve an understanding of the creative and eminent individual has a lineage extending from Cox (1926) to Goertzel et al (1962 and 1978), Gardner (1993, 1997), and Gruber (e.g. 1988, 1989) and others. Examples of using personal interviews to obtain information have been seen in Roe (1951a), Bloom (1985) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). Mayer (1999: p451-3)

[1] In contrast to the research that exists on the development of the exceptional creative individual, or genius.

describes biographical methods as being one of the principal methods utilized to study creativity.[2] Biographical studies are normally considered as appropriate to the study of the impact of the life course on individual creativity (Gedo and Gedo 1990: p9).

A literature search and exploratory empirical work have influenced the path to specific research questions. This will be described in greater detail in chapters 2 and 4. It is also appropriate, however, to acknowledge the different sources of theory on the development of an individual life over time.

An examination of the development of creativity across the entire life span in creative people has rarely been undertaken as a single piece of work; exceptions include Roe (1953) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). For this reason, the extent and sources of existing research information against which to examine or contrast data from this study will change with each life period.

Childhood and Schooling

There is a substantial body of literature on the development patterns of "exceptional" gifted and creative individuals in their childhood and teenage years (e.g. Goertzels and Goertzels 1962). This enables a detailed contrast to be made between the "ordinary" participants in this study and "exceptional" creative individuals in this age range.

Early Adulthood: Post-schooling to the onset of the mid-life period

The pattern of experience of "exceptional" creative individuals in this period has to be inferred from case study research and work examining the quality and quantity of creative work over time. There are a small number of longitudinal studies of gifted individuals that also allow us to infer the nature of experiences that may be encountered. Different

[2] The other methods named are psychometric, psychological, biological, computational and contextual.

empirical studies and theories have been assembled to examine the range of experiences that may be found in work development in this time period.

The Mid-Life Period (35 – 45 years of age)

Empirical research data on the nature and effects of the mid-life period is limited in general, and for creative individuals in particular. For this reason, this thesis will examine the experience of this research group against structures drawn from this limited data and theory.

The Middle Age Period, to 60 years old

Similarly, empirical research data on the character and effects of the post mid-life period is limited in general and for creative individuals in particular. For this reason two perspectives have been adopted. First, this research seeks emerging patterns of behaviour and activity in this time period within the "ordinary" creative participants. Second, a relatively new focus of research has been chosen for exploration – that of the "late life style"[3]. This offers indications of what may happen in the practice of the arts, music and literature in later life. This project also considers whether this can be seen in the experiences of "ordinary" creative individuals.

1.3 Why Is This An Appropriate Area Of Study?

This section considers the reasons that exist for the research in this thesis in the broad context of creativity research, and other areas related to this thesis. The question posed by the thesis must be considered from several perspectives.

[3] The late life style has also been called the "old age style", or the "swan song effect" in different pieces of research. Work to-date has been focused on an age range over 60 years old. Yet some speculate (Cohen-Shalev 1989) whether the late life style may also be found in those working in their middle age years.

1. The field of creativity research: A number of scholars, e.g. Feist and Runco (1993: p271), Sternberg and Lubart (1999: p3), Feldman (1999: p160) and Mayer (1999: p458/9) have concluded that the volume of creativity research significantly lags behind other areas of mainstream psychology. In a twenty year period Sternberg and Lubart (1999) found creativity entries represented only 0.5% of the Psycinfo database entries – whereas references to reading, for example, represented three times that amount. Feist and Runco (1993: p278) concluded that the amount of empirical research in creativity was not increasing, though theoretical work was. This thesis provides additional empirical work in the field of creativity research.

2. Expanding the understanding and study of creativity into new areas of the population: Torrance (1995: p21) argues that creativity is a universal attribute that is capable of development. This thesis considers definitions of creativity usually applied to the eminent in more localised contexts, here termed 'ordinary' or 'everyday' creativity found in people at work. Perlmutter (1991: pviii) proposes that most people operate with latent or under-used capacity – and that their skills and performance are open to intervention and change. This view is echoed by Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993: p1). Expanding a search for creativity into everyday contexts and over the life span is potentially useful and the patterns found can be contrasted with what is known of the exceptional creative individual.

3. Providing a balance to a product-centred view-point: A significant focus of research examining the links between creativity and aging (by volume of material produced) has been into the patterns of productivity and achievement over time (e.g. Lehman 1953, Dennis 1966). This latter research presents the reader with an articulate view of when,

and how much work is produced, and the times at which the work may be expected to achieve a peak in social recognition. In this thesis, however, it will be argued that this alone is a limited perspective. The patterns of development in creativity over time – how individuals acquire skill and motivation, and convert these into active careers – what changes occur in the nature and reason for work and how this is perceived and experienced by those involved – all provide further perspectives from which to examine creativity in the context of an individual life (Freeman 1993: p19). This thesis offers the opportunity for an examination of creativity from the perspective of the individual life span, and the ways and paths through which it is operationalised and affected over time.

4. Learning when and how a 'gift' becomes active: The development of a career based on creativity is often assumed to involve developmental milestones, for example, the development of a cognitive 'gift' or talent into creative ability, and from there acquiring a lifestyle of the characteristics that will deliver creative activity (Albert 1990b: p174; Freeman 1993: p14). It is acknowledged that a key question in the understanding of a creative life is when and how an individual gift become active (Gruber 1986). Conversely, it is also acknowledged that potential talent in many young people is not converted into an active gift, (Albert 1980b: p174, and Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p1 and 33) and that this represents in a large part a failure within the education system. This study provides an opportunity to examine the ways and times at which a potential in ordinary individuals is activated in the context of their childhood, youth and career and how it may change over time. Simonton (1983a: p150) argues that any theory of creativity which fails to reach an understanding of this transition will be judged as inadequate.

5. Adding to an understanding of creativity, aging and the elderly: The proportion of elderly people in the population is changing. Sheehy (1995: p8 and 64) points out that the percentage of the UK population aged between 45 and 59 years will expand by 17% by the year 2001. By the year 2020 people over 50 years of age will be the largest percentage of the UK population. In the USA 80 million people, or a 72% increase, will reach "middle age" by 2015 (Willis and Reid 1999: p.xv). Additionally, in the last fifty years, life expectancy has increased by ten years. This increasing proportion of elderly people in society requires an increased understanding of adult development in these later years (Reid and Willis 1999: p275). Yet there is a background of cultural discomfort with aging and being old (Levinson 1978; Sheehy 1995). Interest in creativity in later life is being mentioned more frequently in the context of this aging population, with both increased numbers and a longer life span (e.g. Sheehy 1995: p145). Paul Torrance (1995: p101 and 103) suggests creative skills and behaviour in later years allow the elderly to hold on to and increase the quality of their life. He suggests any understanding that allows the elderly to hold on to and increase a quality of life gained through creative skills and behaviour is to be advocated. Additionally, he equates creativity with flexibility and sees it as a central skill to support the aging and the elderly in coping with huge levels of change within existing society. Cropley (1997: p241/2) reports on four studies where the health and performance of the elderly were seen to increase through the teaching of creative skills. Munsterberg (1984) and Gedo (1990) also describe case studies to illustrate why the application of creativity and creative skills can provide means through which an individual can change and integrate their understandings of later life and health difficulties. This thesis examines creativity in the context of the life span to provide illustrations of how its contribution to a life changes over time.

6. Offering opportunities for intervention and change: If the developmental patterns and experiences of creative individuals can be identified, then this presents an opportunity for considering whether potential intervention and change is achievable in the lives of others, or at least a broader understanding of ways of living that offer alternatives. (Goertzel et al 1978: p78; Simonton 1987: p132; and Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p151.) This thesis examines areas in the individual life span that may suggest potential points of intervention.

1.4 The Original Contribution Of This Thesis

The original contribution of this thesis will be considered in detail in the final chapter. In summary, its originality comes from being a study intended to determine developmental patterns of "localised" creativity within a specific population group over the life span (with no prior research in this field traced by the researcher). It then compares these results with developmental patterns of creativity found in exceptional creative individuals and, where possible, with gifted individuals. Another original contribution includes the use and the testing of Jaques's (1965) proposed changes to creative activity after the midlife in a new population group.

1.5 Thesis Structure

A summary of each chapter is as follows:

Chapter 2 – The Literature Review:

The review examines literature contributing to an understanding of ordinary creativity. It examines three primary sources of literature.

- First, research focused on creativity, and what is known about the development of the life of eminent creative individuals. This will offer an important source of matters to contrast with the experiences of the 'ordinary' and the exceptional individual, and may be expected to highlight key differences in experience.
- Second, general life span development theories. This will allow a consideration of the ways in which the experiences of the participant group are either like or unlike those expected generally within life.
- Third, some other perspectives. For example, the theories of successful development across the life span, self-actualization and flow, and the contribution of research into gifted individuals.

This review concludes by considering specific ways in which this literature can be used to ask questions of the research data in order to explore this subject area.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

This chapter will review:

- Why a research approach which draws on grounded theory and contrasting existing theory can contribute to an understanding of this subject.
- The contribution of biographic study to creativity theory.
- Interview structure and analysis.
- The choice of this participant sample.

Chapter 4 – The Exploration and Development of Empirical Work

This chapter will describe the development of the empirical work, and how that has contributed to the underlying structure and questions considered. It will also describe the

pattern of interview development over discrete groups of participants, and the way in which that has contributed to the focus of this thesis.

Chapters 5 to 9 - Main Study Results and Discussion

George Vaillant in his (1977) landmark book describing the results of the longitudinal Grant Study of 95 men wrote: "their lives were too human for science, too beautiful for numbers ... and too immortal for bound journals" (p11). He did this to communicate how difficult it was to represent the detail and quality of these lives in a defined and relatively small written space. This thesis faces a similar challenge. The raw data emerging from the 40 biographic interviews of this thesis consists of transcripts approximately 2,700 pages in length and 'Nudist' analysis of approximately 65 analytical codes amongst these documents (also numbering in excess of 2,700 pages). In order to present this in manageable amounts, and to focus discussion of this information in a way which will be practical for a reader, data is divided into four separate time periods.

Chapter 5: "Childhood and adolescence".

Chapter 6: "Early adulthood", to the commencement of the mid-life period.

Chapter 7: "The Mid-life period".

Chapter 8: "Middle Age, to 60 years old".

Study results and discussion will be presented for each time period in the individual chapters.

Chapter 9: "Other Factors" examines the possible influence of certain factors that were independent of these lifespan time frames, e.g. the influence of disability on creative activity.

Chapter 10 - "Localised Creativity"

This chapter considers the relationship of "localised creativity" to positive development and giftedness, and summarises some of the characteristics of localised creativity.

Research questions are used to help structure the data, along with a tabular presentation of key results. Illustrative quotations will be incorporated to bring out the voice of participants themselves.

Chapter 11 - Conclusions

This chapter will present conclusions from this research and suggest possible further research arising from this.

Runco and Sakamoto (1999: p62) and Sternberg and Lubart (1999: p10-12) each conclude that creativity is a multifaceted phenomenon requiring research which focuses on multiple influences and components which are present when creativity appears. The latter authors describe such research as a "confluence" approach, and suggest that it offers the possibility of accounting for the diverse aspects of creativity. The research presented in this thesis falls within the confluence perspective.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is focused on examining the life span development patterns of 40 individuals with a reputation for creative influencing in a localised context (e.g. in an organisation). There is no prior research in this area that the researcher has been able to locate. This, therefore, immediately raises a question of what literature, theoretical and empirical work is relevant to developmental patterns that emerge from this research project.

At the outset of this research, the researcher was psychodynamically oriented and assumed creativity to reside in an individual's head. As he progressed reading the creativity and related literatures his views changed radically. He came first to understand the importance of experience and cognition in the development of knowledge and potential for creativity through reading the likes of Sternberg. After reading Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner he came to understand the interrelationship of domain and field with the individual characteristics in creative endeavour and began to appreciate the importance of a systems perspective. Reading the depth and extent of biographic studies of the eminent and exceptionally creative individuals also provided detailed indications of the ways in which their early life experience may have been distinctive. Throughout, his focus has been on elaborating the processes by which creativity develops and unfolds through midlife and subsequently across the lifespan as a whole. He believes this research project has contributed to the literature on creative development by focusing on the impact of certain relational and environmental factors on the development of localised creativity.

But the immediate challenge remains to determine what theoretical perspectives and existing literature are relevant to the unfolding of creativity in a sample known for localised creativity. Roe (1953), in a classic study on the developmental influences of scientists, argued that, when a researcher was examining questions where the results were unclear or simply not known, then multiple theoretical perspectives behind data-gathering

would be appropriate. This perspective is endorsed in literature on qualitative research methods (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Four literatures available that are potentially relevant are: theories associated with creativity in the social system/context; the lifespan development theories which provide data on the development of normal individuals; literature on the exceptional creative and gifted groups; and literature on particularly well-adjusted individuals such as self-actualisers. Since there is very little literature on the development of everyday and localised creativity, the researcher has decided to draw on all of these literatures in the examination of creative development in this sample. By examining creativity in the context of the social system it will be possible to consider certain influences in the surrounding environment. By using normal lifespan development literatures he will be well placed to see whether his sample of localised creatives is developing normally, or not. By looking at the literature on the development of the exceptionally creative and gifted populations it should be possible to see if the patterns that are associated with creative development there are also found with a sample of localised creatives. The examination of successful life development theories allows a brief consideration of the extent to which localised creativity may be a normal outcome in certain healthy well-adjusted populations. To this end, this chapter introduces the four distinct areas of literature, plus a fifth part dealing with research questions. These cover the following:

- Part 1 – Creativity: Definitions of creativity – types of creativity – types of creative persons – creativity in the social context/system – and the presence of creativity in 'everyday life' (in contrast to the work of the exceptional creative individual.) This will introduce what the researcher means by 'creativity', and how this may be present in this research sample. The perspective of creativity in the social system provides a framework through which to examine individual's life events in the external world, e.g. the choice of a work domain and the nature of influence of the field, such as parents or an organisation they work in.

- Part 2 – Theories of General Life Span Development: This part examines 4 principal theories of life span development in order to provide a context to understand the life development experiences of research participants. This will allow us to consider whether research results on the lifespan development of an individual with a reputation for creativity in a localised context are 'normal', or in some way different.
- Part 3 – Theories of Life Span Development of the Exceptional Creative Individual: This part will present a composite picture of what is known about the creative development of the exceptional creative individual from childhood to middle age. This will also draw on literature indicating the experiences of gifted individuals. This literature will provide a further basis for considering the developmental experiences of the 'localised' creative individual. For example, do the experiences of 'localised' creative individuals reflect those of the exceptional creative individual – might their developmental experiences be similar? If not, in what ways are they different?
- Part 4 – Additional Contributing Theories: This part considers other theories on successful life development and optimal experience, such as Self-actualisation and flow, and in what way the examination of 'localised creativity' may overlap with or complement these phenomena.
- Part 5 – Research Questions: The literature review closes with a description of research questions and an indicator of how the contributing literature is used to examine the research data.

There is a potential tension in using four discrete areas of theory and research to understand the lifespan development of this particular participant group. The material is produced from individual accounts and from a broader collective or social perspective. The researcher aims to draw on factors identified in the lifespan, creative and gifted literatures (such as parental support, the role of mentors, the extent to which an organisation expects and accepts change) to elucidate how members of this sample develop

their creativity over time in the social system of which they are part. As will be explained in chapter 3, the lifespan development influences in this research area are not necessarily known or understood. Therefore adopting a broad theoretical and research perspective raises the potential for identifying key contributory developmental factors and has a precedent in the classic biographical study of Roe (1953).

It is important to note that the amount of literature that considers creativity, the development of the exceptional creative individual, giftedness and life span development (as well as Self-actualisation and 'flow') is substantial. The principal focus of this thesis is the life span development of creative individuals. This literature review, therefore, deliberately only summarises key arguments and contributions in these two areas – life span and creativity – while drawing on literature under certain related headings such as giftedness. While critical examination is offered in this review, the use of these theoretical and empirical research perspectives has a lineage in understanding the lifespan development of these individuals (e.g. Roe 1953, Ochse 1990, and Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The purpose of making this statement at this point in the literature review is to make the presentation of the literature achievable in the space allowed for this thesis.

Part 1 – Creativity

2.2 Definitions of Creativity

2.2.1 Characteristics of Creativity

A common starting point for defining creativity is to examine its characteristics. The different definitions share similar features, as the following range of examples illustrates:

Gruber & Wallace (1999: p94)"The creative product must be new and must be given value according to some external criteria".

Martindale (1999: p137)	"A creative idea is one that is both original and appropriate for the situation in which it occurs".
Lumsden (1999: p153)	"Creativity is a kind of capacity to think up something new that people find significant".
Feist (1999: p274)	" ... novel and adaptive solutions to problems".
Lubart (1999: p339)	" ... the ability to produce work that is novel and appropriate".
Boden (1999: p351)	" ... the generation of ideas that are both novel and valuable".
Feldman et al (1994: p1)	" ... the achievement of something remarkable and new, something which transforms and changes a field of endeavour in a significant way".
Amabile (1996: p35)	"... it is both a novel and appropriate, useful, correct or valuable response to the task at hand".

The phrasing of a majority of these definitions could apply to many settings yet the focus of these authors is generally on exceptional acts. The common theme within these definitions is novelty or originality and utility or usefulness. These definitions also reflect a pattern of defining creativity by products, the characteristics of the outcome, whether an object or an idea – but not exclusively so. Many researchers have also focused on the person, process and press, (after Rhodes 1961) i.e. the "creative person", the "creative process" and/or the "creative press" or environments that originated the creative product or

outcome. Barron (1988: p80) illustrates how the person, process and product have become used in providing definitions of creativity. He writes:

> "Creativity is the ability to respond adaptively to the needs for new approaches and new products. It is essentially the ability to bring something new into existence purposefully, though the process may have unconscious, or subliminally conscious, as well as fully conscious components. ... The "something new" is usually a *product* resulting from a *process* initiated by a *person*. These are therefore the three modes in which creativity may most easily be studied. The defining properties of these new products, processes, and persons are their originality, their aptness, their validity, their adequacy in meeting a need."

While these definitions have generally been used for the study of creativity in those individuals acknowledged for exceptional domain-changing achievement, the researcher will argue in section 2.2.5 that these characteristics may also be used for examining the work of those with a reputation for creativity in a localised context.

How can creativity be studied? In reviewing 30 authors contributing to Sternberg (1999), Mayer (1999: p 451-459) suggests that the commonest approaches reflect the "4 Ps" (person, process, product and 'press' or environment). He cites six research approaches or paradigms as being used: psychometric, psychological, biographical (including historiometric), biological, computational and contextual. Mayer argues that psychometric approaches have been most widely used over the last 50 years. In looking to future work Mayer advocates further research, more use of the other methods, and greater discipline or structure being introduced into empirical methods. The researcher seeks to contribute to the study of creativity via the use of biographic research methods.

The definitions of creativity outlined above can be enhanced in three important aspects – (a) areas of creative work – (b) types of creative person – and (c) the social system or context of creativity.

2.2.2 Areas of Creative Work

The work of Howard Gardner (1993: p313/4) and Policastro and Gardner (1999: p220/1) has widened and refined the definition of creativity by proposing the areas in which creative work may be found. They propose and define five areas of creative work:

- Solution of problems: e.g. the proof of Fermat's last theorem.
- Theory building: e.g. Einstein's or Freud's work constructing concepts to account for data.
- The creation of a permanent work in a symbolic system: e.g. Eliot's poem the Waste Land, or Picasso's Guernica.
- Performance of a ritualised work: e.g. the dance performances of Martha Graham.
- High-stake performances: e.g. Gandhi, who carried out a series of actions in public in order to achieve social change.

2.2.3 Type of Creative Person

Policastro and Gardner have taken this further in defining four different types of relationship a *person* may have with a domain of knowledge and activity – what the researcher considers 'types' of creative persons.

- A Master: is an individual who has achieved "complete mastery over one or more domains of accomplishment; his or her innovation occurs within established practice". (E.g. Mozart, Rembrandt, George Elliot.)
- A Maker: creates a new domain. E.g. Freud and psychoanalysis.
- An Introspector: is an individual concerned with "exploration of his or her inner life: daily experiences, potent needs and fears, the operation of consciousness (both that of

the particular individual and that or individuals more generally)". E.g. Virginia Woolf, Annais Nin, James Joyce.

- An Influencer: "also explores the personal world, but directs his or her creative capacities towards affecting other individuals". E.g. Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela.

(Gardner 1997: p10–13; Policastro and Gardner 1999: p221/2)

Gardner suggests these are the "four major forms of extraordinariness" in an individual, (1997: p12). He also explains that the boundaries between these categories can overlap: e.g. Freud mastered neurology prior to 'making' psychoanalysis, and introspecting aspects of his own life - though he is remembered for his work as a "maker".

Application to this thesis: The research participants involved in this thesis come from a range of occupations and may be defined as creative "influencers" (after Gardner 1993, 1997) who conduct influencing work in a localised context. They have a reputation for novelty, originality and usefulness in that context; in many cases this is a particular organisation. Both creative influencers and 'local' creativity are aspects of creative work that have received very little attention to-date as most research in the area of creativity focuses on people who produce tangible products, or on creative ability, or on studies of exceptionally creative people and geniuses. The researcher is, therefore, arguing that it is timely and appropriate to expand research attention into these areas, i.e. localised creativity in a population of creative influencers.

2.2.4 The Social System of Creativity

A further debate in the creativity literature involves examining whether creativity is a personal or a social phenomenon. At the start of this research the researcher shared an earlier belief described by Csikszentmihalyi (1999: p313) - that creativity originated within

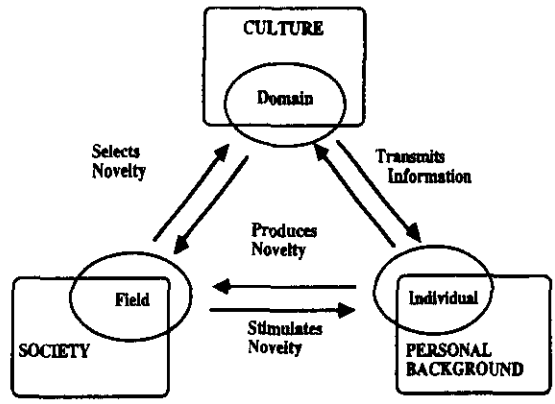
the person, that it was an intrapsychic process. It is increasingly common to find researchers arguing that qualities and traits of the individual are "necessary" but not "sufficient" for the achievement of creativity (e.g. Freeman 1993: p10, Winner 2000.) Through his research Csikszentmihalyi was prompted to consider not only the "what" of creativity, but also the "where" and the "how", (e.g. 1988). This involved the perspective that multiple components are present, operating as a system, when creativity occurs; this is often now termed a "confluence" approach to the study of creativity. Sternberg and Lubart (1999: p12) suggest that it is the confluence perspective that allows the researcher to take account of diverse aspects of creativity.

A systems perspective on the study of creativity has been put forward and used by Feldman, Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi (writing collectively in 1994, and individually in other sources, e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1988, 1999; Gardner 1993). It moves the debate on defining creativity from "what" it is, to "where" it is, or the contextual factors present when it occurs.

The perspective of the system and the social context suggests that the newness of a thought, act or product and its value can only be judged through social evaluation (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p23). Further, by implication, creativity is relative - the recognition and acknowledgement of creative work occur in a social context - it is examined and recognised through the interaction between the producer of the work and the context or 'audience' (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p314). This argument also suggests that the "level" of creativity equates to and is synonymous with the recognition and eminence accorded by the field, the social context of the 'creator' (Simonton 1983a: p150; Albert 1992a: p7). For that reason, creativity "with a capital C", the kind that influences and changes a culture or context, cannot be solely in the mind and work of an individual person. It must be communicated to others in a manner they understand, which can then be assessed and accepted by them (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p27).

In the light of this background, a focus on the individual and his or her genetics are not enough to explain fluctuations and differences in creativity. Advances in creativity must involve the accumulation of knowledge in a domain, role models to indicate standards and directions and the social communication of values, knowledge and skill (Csikszentmihalyi 1988: p326 and Ochse 1990: p57).

The systems model proposed by Csikszentmihalyi, Gardner and Feldman has three components, the individual, domain and field. Csikszentmihalyi argues that creativity can be observed only at the intersection where these three components interact (see below - 1999: p314).



The relationships between the three parts of this model, the domain, field and individual are dynamic – each affects the others, and is affected by them. There is, therefore, no set starting point in reviewing this system. Csikszentmihalyi argues that there is a spiral of influence between the domain, the person and the field, and then back to the domain in a generative cycle, (1988: p329 and 333) as explained below.

Domain

A domain is defined as the structure and organisation of a body of knowledge about a single topic. It exists independently of the individual and has a history and skills that can be learnt. It will involve a representational system (or "symbol system") through which the domain's knowledge will be communicated – its rules and procedures (Feldman 1994: p20 and 22; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p27).

Without the existence of a domain there will be no creativity. For example, a person cannot contribute to music without access to and learning some part of the domain of music. Csikszentmihalyi argues that "creativity occurs when a person makes a change in a domain that will be transmitted through time" (Csikszentmihalyi 1988: p330 and 1999: p315). Access to and work within a domain is a way of earning a living for most people – but is a much stronger calling for others, particularly creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p37).

The Individual

Feldman (1994: p16) describes the individual as "the site of the acquisition and transformation of knowledge that has the possibility of changing domains and fields". The role of the individual is to produce some variation or change in the information or symbol system that constitutes the domain. In the context of this system, creativity occurs when the individual produces that novel change, and when it is then accepted by others, i.e. the field, and given utility and use, by its subsequent incorporation back into the structure of the domain (Csikszentmihalyi 1988: p330 and 1996: p28).

The Field

The field is defined as the social and cultural organisation of a profession, craft or job that allows or obstructs the development of work (the creation of 'products') and the recognition of "creative" works. The field consists of "entities" that mediate the access or influence to the domain. In the early life or career of the individual it is likely to consist of family, relatives and/or friends that decide the acceptability of access to a particular skill, way of working or knowledge. There must usually be sufficient available energy and willingness from these entities, e.g. support from parents, to introduce a child to a domain, and connect the child with the field in the shape of teachers or mentors. The field will extend to educational institutions and work places in which the individual apprentices

him or herself to learn – and eventually the teachers, critics, opinion-makers, gatekeepers or leaders in a context, or in some cases the general public (Gardner and Wolf 1994: p57/8; Feldman 1994: p16; Csikszentmihalyi 1998: p331, 1996: p28 and 1999: p315, 328 and 329). The Field will provide and even encompass the domain with "sources of support, socialisation, tradition, evaluation and recognition" (Feldman 1994: p36). The characteristics of the field will affect the rate of creativity that takes place, and the recognition it receives (Csikszentmihalyi 1999: p322, 3 and 7).

Alternatively the recognition and acceptance of a creative change takes time – for the "field" to acknowledge and accept the work of the individual, and then to communicate this change into the subsequent performance and conduct of the "domain". The new contents of the domain become part of subsequent influence or input to individuals that follow.

The Dynamics of the System

If we accept that creativity occurs "enmeshed" in the interaction of this system, then a creative individual faces learning the content of a domain *as well as* the criteria and the way in which a field selects acceptable change, i.e. the individual must learn and internalise the working and 'rules' of the system (Freeman 1993: p10; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p47, and 1999: p332). This framework also implies and offers an analytical structure through which creativity may be studied. Feldman (1994: p25) suggests that the three areas need to be studied individually as well as in their relationship to each other.

Csikszentmihalyi (1999) portrays the system from the perspective of "Big C" creativity, and how the system works for large-scale and/or socially acclaimed creative acts to be recognised by and integrated into a culture. The researcher argues that this is not the sole perspective from which the systems model can add to our understanding of the development of creativity – that it can be used to study creativity in other contexts,

specifically more localised areas. This point of view is implied by Feldman (1994: Chapter 1).

The application to this thesis: Historically creativity and lifespan studies have tended to focus on the individual, emphasising the role of personal characteristics, skills and traits. A systems perspective on creativity takes a less individualistic view. Though this thesis focuses on the development of individual creativity across time it takes account of interpersonal and environmental influences on creativity (such as parents, mentors and organisational climate). In this way it seeks to elucidate how social systems affect the development of creativity in individuals. Freeman (1993) has used the systems model concepts in a follow-up study of the participants involved in Csikszentmihalyi and Getzel's (1976) work published as "Creative Vision". Freeman's study reviewed the experiences of those who had not achieved widespread social acclaim for their work. This researcher proposes to draw on the systems perspective to understand creative development in a localised context. The details of this are expanded upon below in section 2.2.5.

2.2.5 Is Creativity Available to All?

So far this literature review has drawn on research focused primarily on creativity associated with acclaimed acts, e.g. those that change a culture, even though some of the definitions used imply that creativity may be defined in other ways or settings. "Big C" creativity is seen as a contribution or product that changes a complete domain of knowledge or endeavour, and is accorded recognition or social acclaim by the "field" of judges (Feldman 1994: p2; Albert 1975/1992: p60). This tradition or approach focuses potentially limited research resources on major manifestations of creativity and could have the implication and consequence of suggesting that "creativity is a limited and narrowly available resource" (Isaksen and Dorval 1993: p310). But is creativity available in the

general population, to "ordinary people", or is it solely available to the exceptional individual?

Amabile (interviewed in Goleman et al 1992: p28) argues that this perspective on 'Big C' creativity is "rarefied" and that creativity can be displayed in simpler, everyday settings (e.g. cooking and bricklaying). Given the position that creativity is not only associated with exceptional and culture-changing acts, what other definition may be relevant?

Maslow's work on self-actualisers[1] is a well-known exploration of creative people who hadn't achieved national or international recognition. He described creativity in the context of activities, processes, attitudes and products. He was unequivocal: there is a "more widespread kind of creativeness" (1970: p159) that is "a fundamental characteristic, inherent in human nature, a potentiality given to all or most beings at birth, which is most often lost or buried or inhibited as the person gets enculturated" (1970: p161). He saw this creativity as applicable to many products over and above those conventionally expected, like the arts - he gave examples applying to housework, medicine and psychiatry. This implies that the characteristics of creative work described earlier (novelty, originality and use) could be applied to many areas.

Craft (2000: p3–10) offers a range of descriptions of everyday creativity that perhaps make it more recognisable. "Being imaginative", "possibility thinking", "going beyond the obvious", "seeing more than is initially apparent or interpreting something in a way that is unusual". Any of these which have an aspect of originality for the creative person – as well as "some kind of outcome ... a public indication to show for it ..." and it " ... is of value ... it has some use in their life ... it can be held in esteem in an appropriate context" - would be considered creative.

[1] Self-actualisation as a concept involved in life span development will be examined later in this literature review.

Goleman et al (1992: p24–29) say very directly that the act of achieving something "novel and appropriate" can be found and developed in many ordinary settings – that "daily life is a major arena for innovation and problem solving".

Runco and Richards (1997: p.ix) describe ordinary creativity as a "general style of thinking, even of living. Of ... *originality* brought to the tasks of everyday life ... as an essential tool for adaptation to our environment and, ... to a changing world". Torrance (1995: p73) echoes this view. He argues that when definitions of creativity involve constructive responses to new situations, rather than merely adaptation, it places creativity in the realms of everyday living. Feldman (1994: p2) describes "small creativity" as a "tendency to bring a fresh and lively interpretation to any endeavour, whether humble or exalted". Ripple (1989) defines this type of creativity as ordinary people thinking in identifiably unique ways when they meet problems in real life situations.

Amabile (1996: p38) refines this approach when she applies a conventional definition, a product focus of creativity, to an everyday setting. She suggests that ordinary individuals can do "everyday things" in ways that are novel, original and appropriate to their circumstances. As indicated in section 2.2.1, this thesis is using this definition of creativity within this research in localised contexts.

Taking the position that all people have the potential to be creative and defining it as outlined above has two immediate consequences. First, it moves research questions away from a concentration on the level of creativity possessed by an individual into areas where we examine different forms, types or styles of creativity (Isaksen and Dorval 1993: p310). Second, it implies that a continuum of creativity exists, from the exceptional individuals and acts that receive widespread social acclaim, through to "ordinary" individuals using a creative approach to any aspect of everyday life including their work (Amabile 1996: p 38). (This perspective will be further explored and defined in the results chapter 10, section 10.3.)

There are several implications of assuming this stance. If the systems concept of creativity is used to examine 'ordinary' or 'localised' creativity it requires the adjustment of the definition of the "domain" and "field" to a localised context. For example, in examining the work of a particular scientist or manager in an organisational context, there is the practical task of defining the "field" as the organisation or professional body, and the "domain" as the use and application of a particular body of knowledge in that localised field. This provides a means to examine the dynamics of 'localised creativity', rather than solely that of receiving recognition in all of society or a particular branch of science.

Amabile (1996: p38) has also addressed creativity in a localised and 'everyday' context. If this approach is combined with her definition of ordinary creativity, it would appear to support the view adopted in this thesis that we can examine ordinary creativity by looking at creative activity in a localised context.

The use of the concept of a continuum of creativity (from 'exceptional' to 'ordinary') can also help in understanding the characteristics which may be present in a localised situation. If we turn to the theories of Feldman et al (1994), where "big" creativity implies those contributions in receipt of public acclaim and social recognition, and work down that continuum (see below) arguably we would find those individuals in receipt of localised, rather than national acclaim, and further down still, those individuals working creatively, who are working skilfully, and as yet have received no recognition for it.

"Social acclaim" - - - - - - - - -"Local acclaim" - - - - - - - - - "Unacknowledged practice / activity"

The position in this thesis, following the lead of Goleman et al (1992), Amabile (1996) and Craft (2000) described above, is that terms and definitions such as domain and field used to study "big" creativity can be applied in a local context. Doing this would expand the potential for the study of creativity in ordinary people.

The researcher believes accepting a continuum that includes "ordinary" or localised creativity is valuable. Amabile (1996: p40) takes a practical view: that to achieve an understanding of the social psychological conditions that foster creativity it may be more relevant and practical to study creativity at a "modest" level. She concludes that there is more of ordinary creativity available to the researcher for study, and that the eminent or those with high levels of talent may be absent, or harder to find. Additionally, a shift in focus to 'style' of creativity may, according to Isaksen and Dorval (1993: p311), help individuals to understand and accept the ways they are personally creative, rather than perhaps asserting they are "not creative".

A number of authors have suggested that creativity is a fundamental attribute to help and support us all in adapting and responding to a fast-changing and sometimes dangerous world (e.g. Ripple 1989: p199; Barron 1988: p77; Gruber 1989: p278; Craft 2000: p21 and 168; Henry 1991). Moving the definition, study and use of creativity into ordinary and localised life may be part of achieving this aim.

The application to this thesis:

In summary, this thesis is working from the position that creativity can be displayed in everyday settings (e.g. cooking and bricklaying) and localised settings (such as organisations) and that ordinary individuals can do work in ways that are novel, original and appropriate to their circumstances (Amabile 1996, and quoted in Goleman et al 1992).

Part 2 – Theories of General Life Span Development

2.3 Theories of Life Span Development

This literature review moves now to examine theories of general life span development. These theories offer frameworks for understanding and interpreting the life stories collected in this research project. Of additional potential interest is the contrast between

the general adult life span development and the experiences of the exceptional individual – and how they complement and differ from each other.

Two classic general life span theories in particular will be examined, those of Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson and with subsidiary reference to the work of Roger Gould and George Vaillant. Erikson and Levinson not only contain within their theories, by implication, references to the development of creativity, but a number of sources cite these works as the primary theories relevant to the examination of life span development (Atkinson 1998, Perlmutter and Hall 1992, Sternberg 1995, Stevens 1985, Ryff 1984).

Levinson, Gould and Vaillant each draw substantially on self-report descriptions of life experience in order to propose underlying structures and theories of this development. Erikson, Levinson and Gould each assume that the individual progresses through a series of stages during life in which the structure of personality will change according to the issues being experienced and addressed at the time. Additionally, they propose that personality is shaped, developed and influenced by interactions with society over time. They look at the psychosocial experience of the life span.

2.3.1 Erik Erikson – The Life Cycle

Erikson's theory of the life cycle is the most comprehensive of the life span theories in covering childhood through to old age. His theory originated through his psychoanalytic work, his work with healthy adolescents and with the Sioux and Yurok American Indian tribes. It is a theory that is meant to encompass both sexes and to be cross-cultural. Possible criticisms of this theory will be examined later in this section.

Erikson saw the life cycle as containing eight discrete and sequential stages through which eight basic strengths may emerge "each the outgrowth of a time-specific developmental confrontation" (Erikson 1988: p74). Each stage is characterised as a "crisis" that comes from the conflict of two opposing forces or trends at that particular time of life. A positive outcome to the crisis led, in Erikson's view, to the development of a

virtue, or strength. His use of the word crisis did not imply a possible disaster – but a turning point, an opportunity, and that the resolution of the conflict of the two opposing forces could direct individual development in positive or negative directions. The nature of the resolution achieved, or the failure to confront its needs, will affect each subsequent life stage (Perlmutter and Hall 1992: p291). Erikson conceived of growth and development as occurring through integration of the conflicting forces at each stage, and not succumbing to alienation (Roazen 1976: p109/110). He believed that each person would interpret and experience this pattern through their own particular traits and character. A key practical part of this theory is that the individual faces holding the tension between the two opposing forces from that point on through life, with the goal being that the positive tendency or force is primary. Joan Erikson made clear that a failure to achieve balance, or the favouring of the negative tendency, could be redressed later in life (Erikson 1988: p75 – 77).[2] Erik Erikson portrays the eight stages in the following chart:

Table 2.1: Erikson's Life Stages (1980: p245.)

Time Period	The Stages of the Life Cycle							
Old Age (8)								Integrity vs. Despair **Wisdom**
Adulthood (7)							Generat-ivity vs. Stagnation **Care**	
Young Adulthood (6)						Intimacy vs. Isolation **Love**		
Adoles-cence. (5)					Identity vs. Identity Confusion **Fidelity**			
School Age (4)				Industry vs. Inferiority **Compet-ence**				
Play Age (3)			Initiative vs. Guilt **Purpose**					
Early Childhood (2)		Autonomy vs. Shame **Will**						
Infancy (1)	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust **Hope**							

[2] Please note this is the work of Joan Erikson. Joan was the co-worker and collaborator of EHE throughout

Erikson, through the epigenetic principle, saw each stage as emerging from and dependent on its predecessor. Each stage is seen as "grounded" in all the ones preceding it, and the achievement of the emerging strength is expected to give new connotations to all the ones that had been experienced to-date (Erikson 1982: p59; Stevens 1983: p17.) The timing of each stage was, according to Erikson, based on the earliest practical time it could be developmentally experienced, and the latest moment it would need to give way or yield to the next crisis and strength (Erikson 1982: p66).

Joan Erikson (1997) wrote up the work of her husband and herself and extended the Life Cycle into a ninth and unnamed stage prompted by increasing life spans and longevity. The Eriksons had developed these theories from clinical and research work and then elaborated their theory though their experience of living through a particular stage of the life cycle. Acknowledging the extension to longevity experienced in both their lives (writing at the age of 97), Joan Erikson described the ninth stage as the experience of living a simple, sometimes limited life in the physical frailty of advanced years. It brought with it "new demands, re-evaluation, and daily difficulties" (p105). It involved living with uncertainties as "it is impossible to know what emergencies and losses of physical ability are imminent" (p105/6). In contrast to the other eight stages, the ninth has the negative possibilities placed first. She described a process of review again of each of the prior stages, and a re-evaluating and experiencing their qualities through the physical frailties and limitations of advanced age.

The proposed nature and content of each stage is summarised in the following table (instead of text, for the purposes of brevity and simplicity of presentation) and includes references to the supporting literature:

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his life.

Table 2.2: A summary of Erikson's life stages

Title	Age	Description	Reference
Stage 1: Basic Trust vs. Mistrust. (Hope)	0 – 12/18 months approx.	This stage is influenced by and focused on providing/gratifying the baby's needs via food and support from the mother. It is to do with quantity *and* quality of care. The mother's personal experiences and feelings will influence this stage. If the "balance of care is sympathetic and loving" basic trust will result. The infant will expect the world to care and respond. Erratic or harsh care would lead to mistrust.	Erikson 1980: p57 – 63. Berk 1998: p177. Bee 1998: p30/1
Stage 2: Autonomy vs. shame and doubt. (Will)	12/18m – 3 years old approx.	Occurring at a time when the child is experiencing early maturation of muscle use and is becoming mobile and seeking to explore and exercise choice, it is centred on whether parents will provide the child with guidance and choice. The positive outcome occurs when the child is supported and allowed choice. In the negative, the child is thought to feel forced or shamed into what he/she can or can't do and to question his/her own autonomy or self control.	Erikson 1980: p75/6. Berk 1988: p177. Bee 1998: p30.
Stage 3: Initiative vs. guilt. (Purpose)	3 – 5 years old approx.	At this time the child is experiencing increased freedom of movement, developing language skills, and a growth of imagination brought on by a capacity to explore and experience a wider space than hitherto. As the child enters school he/she must contend with restrictions and socializations to their developing imagination and exploration. Guilt emerges when a sense of "badness" is learnt – initiative when a child acquires a sense of purpose or direction.	Erikson 1980: p77. Berk 1998: p247.
Stage 4: Industry vs. inferiority. (Competence)	6 – 12 years old	This phase focuses on an 'industry' associated with learning and developing "competence at useful skills and tasks". Inferiority is associated with failures in this area and a growing belied in the child that he/she may never be 'good at anything'. It occurs in the early stage of schooling and alongside the learning of social and cultural norms. The child gains recognition for learning, task completed and outcomes – which Erikson conceived/described as "I am what I learn".	Erikson 1980: p93. Berk 1998: p319. Bee 1998: p30.

Title	Age	Description	Reference
Stage 5: Identity vs. identity confusion. (Fidelity)	Adolescence. 13 – 18 years old.	The child is experiencing the inadequacy of the childhood sense of self or identity and the need to re-form it. Identity is described as a "stable sense of self confirmed by experience". It may take years to achieve and involve false starts and painful experiences. It involves decisions over "what and who one is to be within the social milieu (and) about what ideas and convictions one will stand up for and defend with loyalty and fidelity". (Erikson 1988: p96.) This formation of identity is the basis for the individual's "fit within the wider social world". Where an identity is established the resulting "Fidelity" allows him or her to "commit his or her loyalty to some cause or goal". This commitment may be ideological, personal, as well as occupational. The outcome, it is argued, can be a clear sense of identity achievement; a failure to commit to a sense of identity; 'foreclosure' where the child does not confront this issue and takes on parental and cultural norms; or 'diffusion' where no sense of self or identity is reached.	Perlmutter and Hall 1992: p292. Bee 1998: p303. Erikson 1988: p96.
Stage 6: Intimacy vs. Isolation (Love.)	(Authors quote different age ranges for this stage. Approx. 19/20 – 40 years old.)	This is a time of early working life, career, sociability and partners that go beyond the family or original home context. This stage centres on a young adult's thoughts and feelings about relating to and committing to an intimate partner. Some independence would be surrendered and identity becomes experienced in terms of two people. Erikson describes this as the "ability to fuse your identity with someone else's without fear that you are going to lose something yourself". It is argued that this forms the security or basis on which the young adult proceeds safely into the world. Failure to achieve this results, according to Erikson, in loneliness and self-absorption. The achievement of intimacy is also a fundamental preparation for the 7th stage, involving generativity, or a care for others in society. This is, it must be acknowledged, a very broad picture of this period of adulthood and is developed further by the theories of Levinson and Gould.	Berk 1998: p452 – 5. Bee 1998: p360.
Stage 7: Generativity vs. Stagnation. (Care.)	40 – 60/5.	Commitment and care are offered, and extended beyond the individual and family to that of a wider group, e.g. society. Personal objectives become extended to this wider context - that which will outlive or survive the life of the individual, into the next generation. The focus at this time can be on people (the next generation) or creative products.	Berk 1998: p518. Bee 1998: p433. Erikson 1988: p100.

Title	Age	Description	Reference
		The negative outcome of this stage is self-centredness and self-indulgence.	
Stage 8: Ego Integrity vs. Despair. (Wisdom.)	60/5 +	This stage involves coming to terms with one's life as it is, its "inalterability". Arriving at a sense of wholeness – the capacity to see life events as part of a larger whole. Responsibility is taken for the life lived. Despair is described as a fear of death, often unconscious, and a wish, a search for another chance to experience life – accompanied by a recognition that time remaining is short.	Berk 1998: p588. Bee 1998: p433. Erikson 1980: p104.

(Please note that age ranges are approximate. Erikson was unclear in some cases, and this has led to some differences and disagreements between authors on what ages apply, particularly to the adult stages.)

Erikson's theories are hard to evaluate, and have been criticised. The complexity and time encompassed by Erikson's theory make it very hard to test. For example, the early non-verbal stages of life are probably beyond verification or refutation (Roazen 1976: p112). Neither the terms used nor the concepts employed are precisely defined by Erikson, a situation that may lead to ambiguity in using the framework in a study such as this (Roazen 1976: p.ix; Perlmutter and Hall 1992: p295; Bee 1998: p33).

Erikson puts forward his theory as cross-cultural and universal; yet others, (e.g. Perlmutter and Hall 1992: p295/6; Stevens 1983: p148/9) acknowledge that its focus on individualism make it oriented to western culture and the generality of the research which originated these theories makes such claims at best still unproven.

In considering the applicability of these theories to women, there is some questioning, for example, whether the stage of intimacy (the sixth stage) would precede the stage of identity (e.g. Stevens 1985: p148). Erikson discussed these questions in later life (e.g. Erikson and Erikson 1981). His perspective remained that these theories were: "only a tool to think with, and cannot be a prescription to abide by" (Erikson 1980: p243) – therefore not an absolute definition, but a tool through which to explore.

The application of aspects of Erikson's theories to this thesis is examined together with other life span theorists at the end of the section on life span development theories.

2.3.2 Daniel Levinson – "The Seasons of a Man's and a Woman's Life"

Levinson's works were different to those of Erikson's in that they were empirically (rather than clinically) derived. Levinson's theories were generalisations formed from in-depth biographical interviews with forty men and forty five women and provide detailed descriptions of development from late adolescence through to middle age ("early adulthood") – with theoretical perspectives added for the years following this period. The articulation offered by Levinson of some of the adult years provides a more detailed resource for evaluating the biographies of research participants. Levinson's studies were conducted over two periods of approximately 13/14 years – the men's study between 1965 and 1978, the women's study between 1979 and 1994. In both cases interviews were conducted in the early part of the study. The remaining time was devoted to analysis and writing.

The men represented four occupational groups (executives, biologists, factory workers and novelists) and were 35 – 45 years old at the time of interviews in 1968. They were of varied socio-economic, educational and religious backgrounds. Thirty-five of the men were white, and five were black. The women came from three groups (traditional homemakers, academics and corporate-financial organisations), but were presented as two groups for the purposes of the study – traditional homemakers and career women. The women were aged 30 – 45 years old at the time of interview. Further data was gathered from analysing biographies, fiction, drama and poetry in the men's study and questionnaires to other groups in the women's study.[3]

[3] Fourteen biographies and six fictional sources were named as examples in Levinson 1978: p16.

Levinson (1996: p12) accepted these were not representative or statistical samples. Yet they were detailed studies which he argued contributed to an overall understanding of adult development, a view which appears to be borne out by the extent to which his studies are referred to in other literature.

The following descriptions of adult development represent material from the men's and women's studies. Levinson updated some of his earlier findings (e.g. descriptions for developmental periods) on the basis of experience gained in the women's study. Levinson presented three primary findings:

- *Eras* which form the underlying structure of the human life course.
- *Developmental periods* which are the structure of each era.
- *The individual "life structure"* within these eras and periods, based on the choices and priorities of the person.

(The eras and developmental periods are portrayed in the chart overleaf.)

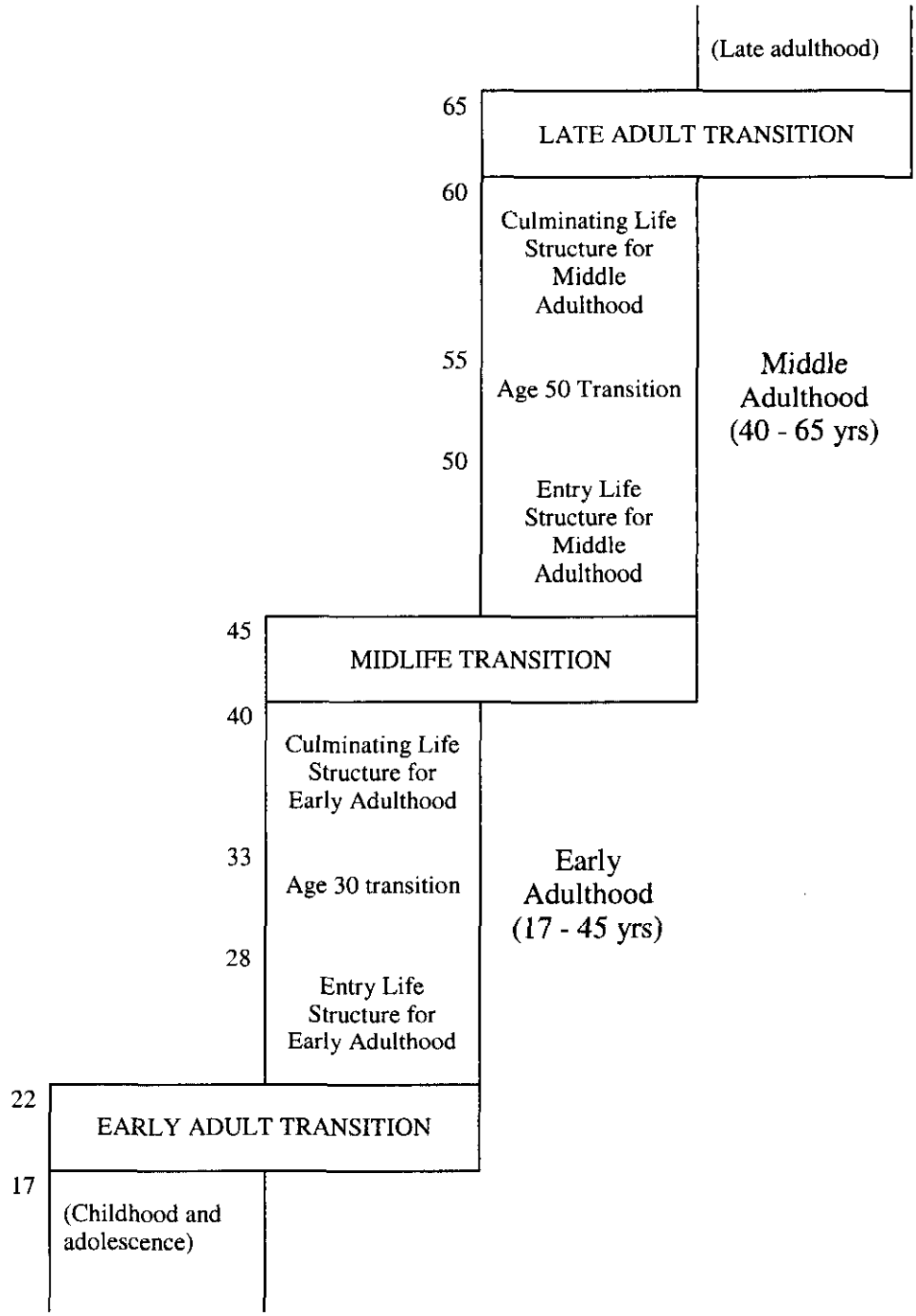
The finding of eras within the human life was described by Levinson as: "... a human life cycle – an underlying order in the human life course, a sequence of seasons through which our lives must pass ..." This order, flow or sequence does, however, permit a "myriad variations related to gender, class, race, culture, historical epoch, specific circumstances and genetics" (1996: p5). Levinson and his colleagues reported the life cycle as a "sequence of eras each lasting approximately 25 years". The eras overlap so as one ends the next is starting – and this ending and beginning are embraced in a transitionary period (Levinson et al 1978: p18). The eras are the broad structure of the life cycle, and within them are contained developmental periods. Each era was seen as having its own biological, psychological and social character that added to the overall development in the life cycle (Levinson 1996: p17). The sequence was found to be the same for men and women.

Each era had within it developmental periods - an alternating pattern of periods of building and maintaining a life structure and periods of transition in which aspects of a life

structure are terminated and individuals move towards a new one. Developmental tasks and goals applying to each age period were pursued within the life structure chosen and constructed – with outcomes questioned and new choices made during the periods of transition (Perlmutter and Hall 1992: p297).

Levinson saw a further primary contribution of this work as providing a language and detail to the nature and structure of this experience and age in adulthood (1996: p14) a contribution valued and used extensively in this research project. Even at that relatively recent time of writing (1996) he argued that adulthood is still the least understood period of life development, in contrast with childhood and old age. A chart portraying the eras of the lifecycle and the development periods is portrayed overleaf.

Table 2.3: The eras of the life cycle, and the developmental period within them



(Note: this chart uses terminology drawn from Levinson 1996: p18. Levinson made changes to the structure published in 1978 on the basis of the work of the women's study. He described the chart as reflecting both men and women. He reported, however, that the meanings of the eras and phases described in the earlier study remained the same.)

Levinson found that the eras and the developmental periods began at an average age (shown on the above chart), with a range of variation two years above and below this average. The era of childhood, or "pre-adulthood" was not covered as part of these studies.

The concept of the "life structure" was also central to Levinson's findings. He defined it as the "underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (1978:p41; 1996: p22). He saw a person's life as having many components (e.g. occupation, relationships, marriage and family, relationship to self and roles in social contexts). The choices and decisions associated with these components and the balance between them change through time, reflecting the importance accorded to them by the individual. These components and the decisions about them formed the "fabric of one's life" and the relationships between the self and the surrounding world. (1978: p42.) "The central components have the greatest significance for the self and the evolving life course" (1978: p44). When one or more components of the life structure are given priority Levinson argued, by implication, other aspects of life would not receive so much attention and may eventually be perceived as unfulfilled (1996: p23). Additionally, the choices made in a life structure would inevitably have flaws, and dissatisfaction would be felt with them (1996: p28/9). The choices made, experiences of their effects, and personal wishes for change or difference form the focus for any alteration to the life structure. The concept of the life structure and the changes in personal emphasis or choice found within it will be examined biographically through time in this research project.

The life structure, he proposed, would evolve and change through the orderly sequence of eras and developmental periods in the adult years (1978: p49; 1996: p24).

The following table presents an overview of the eras and developmental periods described in Levinson 1978 and 1996. (A table has been used instead of text for the purposes of summary and brevity in presentation.):

Table 2.4: A summary of Levinson's eras and developmental period:

Title	Age	Description	Reference
Era: Early Adulthood	17 – 45	The era of greatest energy, contradictions and stress. The biological peak occurs in the 20s and 30s. The main task is to find a place in society, an occupation and raising a family. The individual is "...buffeted by our own passions and ambitions from within and by the demands of family, community and society from without".	Levinson 1996: p19/20
The Developmental Periods:			
Early adult transition	17 – 22	The cross-era transition between childhood and early adulthood. Its task is the termination of childhood and the start of early adulthood. The 'dream' takes shape in this period – a vague sense of self in the adult world".	1996: p25. Furth 1990: p19.
The entry life structure for early adulthood.	22 – 28	The task is to make key choices, especially regarding love, marriage, family, occupation, separation from the family of origin and personal lifestyle. The individual must organise him or herself as a young adult, and form a provisional life structure. There is commonly a relationship with a mentor – a person able to guide and sponsor the activity and development of the younger person. The 'dream' becomes more focused and integrated in this and the subsequent period.	Levinson 1996: p25.
Age 30 Transition	28 – 33	This forms the middle of the era of early adulthood. It is an opportunity to reappraise the entry life structure, to work on its failing or flaws and explore new possibilities out of which a changed life structure can be formed.	1996: p25.
The culminating life structure for early adulthood.	33 – 40	The task is to form a structure within which we can try to establish a more secure place for ourselves in society and to accomplish our youthful dreams and goals.	1996: p26.
The Midlife Transition	40 – 45	This forms a bridge between early and middle adulthood, and is part of both eras. It terminates the life structure of the thirties – is the "end of youth" and involves the creation of a life structure where we can be young-and-old in middle adulthood. Individuation is of major importance in this time – out of this a modified self and life comes for the rest of this era. It is a time of reappraisal – of long-held perspectives and ways in which to use the remaining time in one's life.	1996: p26.

Title	Age	Description	Reference
Era: Middle Adulthood	40 – 65	The biological peak of the individual is passed and a slow decline has begun. The individual is taking his or her place as "senior members" in our world. "It is possible in this era to become more maturely creative, more responsible for self and others, more universal in outlook and less tied to narrow tribal values, more dispassionately purposeful, more capable of intimacy … than ever before".	1996: p20
The Developmental Periods:			
The Entry Life Structure for Middle Adulthood	45 – 50	The task is to create a life structure for the start of middle adulthood. This involves making choices and determining personal priorities on which to build a life in this period.	1996: p26.
The Age 50 Transition	50 – 55	This forms an opportunity to reappraise the entry life structure of Middle Adulthood, to further explore the self and the world, and to adapt and form the basis of a life structure in the following period. Crises are common for people who have made few or inappropriate changes in the previous 10 – 15 years.	1996: p26
The Culminating Life Structure for Middle Adulthood	55 – 60	This is a life structure that provides a vehicle for the realisation of the era's major aspirations and goals.	1996: p26.
The Late Adult Transition	60 – 65	This concludes the era of Middle Adulthood and initiates the ear of Late Adulthood. It involves a profound reappraisal of the past and a shift to a new era. It creates the basis for building a life structure in Late Adulthood.	1996: p26.
Era: Late Adulthood	60+	(Not explored in this research, nor well articulated by Levinson.)	

Note: The descriptions in the table above have been adapted or quoted from Levinson 1996.

Levinson reports a core aspect and development of these phases as being the "individuation" of the person. He described this: "… we have a clearer sense of who we are and what we want. We draw more fully on our inner resources (desires, values, talents, archetypal potentials). We are more autonomous, self-generating, self-responsible" (1996: p32). He made a point, however, of saying that this was not a

description of what happened within the individual – that it was a process that occurred in relationship and in contact with the world in which the individual existed.

The descriptions provided above are generalised comments on the experiences of both men and women. However, Levinson used the theoretical concept of "gender splitting" to explore the meaning of gender and its influence on the lives of women and men. He used this term deliberately to communicate what he saw as "a splitting asunder – the creation of a rigid definition between male and female, masculine and feminine in human life" (1996: p38). Gender splitting was described in four categories:

- "The splitting of the domestic sphere and the public sphere as social domains for women and men."
- "The Traditional Marriage Enterprise and the split it creates between the female homemaker and the male provisioner."
- "The splitting of "women's work" and "men's work"."
- "The splitting of feminine and masculine in the individual psyche."

Levinson described the public (or occupational) sphere of life as the place where men's lives have been traditionally centred "which is their territory and under their control" (1996: p39). This is reflected in how much of the study of men's lives deals with occupational questions and the forefront these take in the developmental period. The domestic sphere, in virtually all societies and over time, has been the focus of women's lives. It consists of the family and related social world. The domestic sphere, in contrast to the public, is seen as more private.

Levinson reported that the "marriage enterprise" was commonly not solely to do with love or emotional relationship – a definition he found surprising. He defined it simply as: "about building an enterprise in which partners can have a good life, according to their lights" (Ibid.: p39). The women who focused their life structures on the traditional marriage enterprise saw "its goal is to have children, to create a certain kind of family life, and to continue (with some improvements) the basic traditions of the family of origin".

Against this background, where women have held jobs they have often been in unskilled or semiskilled jobs, or occupations traditionally occupied by women, like nursing and teaching – though this is less true nowadays.

Some of the experiences and consequences of gender-splitting will be examined in the descriptions of female participants in this research project.

Levinson is far less clear, however, about what he means in suggesting the split of the feminine and masculine in the individual psyche. He describes how some of the women in the sample have to manage, to find ways of living with internalised figures which represent a traditionally home-making female figure, and a public, working and professionally skilled alternative in order to achieve their life structure goals.

Roberts and Newton (1987) published work (during Levinson's final study) which examined 39 biographies of women presented in 4 unpublished dissertations and used similar methods to Levinson. Roberts and Newton reported that women experience the same developmental periods and tasks as men, while their ways of working on them were very different. One of the principal reasons for this was the contrast between "life dreams" or goals of men and women formed in the late teens and early twenties. Men tended to form an "individualistic dream" which was focused on self in an occupation, whereas women formed a "relational dream" with the image of themselves in a world in relation to others, work and career (1987: p157). Women's dreams were described as more "complex and complicated" and harder to balance over time, e.g. women were commonly taking longer to work towards career goals as a result of balancing relationships and families as well as the world of work.

Levinson's work has obvious limitations. He is clear that his studies involved relatively small numbers of people in geographically defined areas, and that they capture information at a point in time for the individuals and the culture in which they are found. Culturally at least, given that the men were interviewed in the 1960's and the women in the 1980's, the influences on them have almost certainly changed since these dates. Levinson,

however, proposes a universality of these results. Levinson backed-up the information from participants with data from biographies and questionnaires so he will have taken into account other factors. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the universality has not been much tested in other times and cultures. The work does, however, offer a level of detail on early and middle adulthood absent from Erikson's sixth and seventh stages covering the same period (1996: p17) and is therefore particularly valuable in understanding the reported experience of participants in this research project. Levinson's work also reflects and reinforces the conclusions of Erikson's sixth and seventh stages, e.g. attention to family formation, intimacy etc (stage six) and subsequently moving on to focus on the development of the next generation (stage seven).

The work of Gould (1978) and Vaillant (1977), to be reviewed next, provide endorsement for Levinson's findings from different study groups, using different research methods. If, as Levinson asserts in the 1996 study, there are still comparatively few studies on adult development then his work offers a language and a structure through which to anticipate and examine the experience of adulthood.

2.3.3 Roger Gould (1978) – "Transformations"

Gould was a Californian-based psychiatrist who proposed that adult consciousness went through a series of transformations as childhood consciousness, beliefs and illusions were progressively confronted and changed during adulthood.

Gould's work was a cross-sectional questionnaire study of 524 "healthy" individuals, and followed an earlier study of a similar structure involving psychiatric outpatients. The individuals were grouped into age ranges between 16 and 50 years old, (16 – 22, 22 – 28, 28 – 34, 34 – 45, and 45 – 50 years old.) They were asked to rank descriptions that were based on preoccupations of the specific age groups according to personal applicability. The descriptions presented described concerns that were considered common to all age groups, and also individual patterns (1978: p.13). Gould

found that patients and non-patients shared the same "concerns about living", and portrayed a "march of concerns and changing patterns of self-awareness between 16 and 50 for men and women" (1978: p14).

Gould's work adds to the understanding of adult development achieved via Erikson and Levinson's theories. Much of Gould's structure of time periods and adult concerns directly compares with those used by Levinson, but is more general in comparison with Erikson. For example, the time period 16 – 22 years old examined in Gould's work matches Levinson's early adult transition. It observes the same goal, "we stop being our parents' child and start constructing an adult identity" (1978: p44). A similar comparison between Gould and Levinson can be seen in the age period 22 – 28 years old, and in the time period 28 – 34 years old, like Levinson, represents that age 30 transition. However, there are different emphases. For Gould, much of the life structure built up till this time will reflect parental and society values. Gould sees this time as one where the individual will start to ask about a life structure and path that they want from the "inside" (1978: p159/161.) Choices are then made from a more personal or internally referenced perspective, as well as the experience and realism gained in the 20s.

Gould's work was undertaken at the same time as Levinson's 1978 work, by a different research method, and in a different geographical area. He used a larger sample base, in discrete age groups and balanced between men and women. Results appear to sustain or reflect many of Levinson's findings, albeit achieved by different methods.

2.3.4 George Vaillant (1977) – "Adaptation to Life"

Vaillant's work represented a culmination of a longitudinal study that had originated in 1937 of men "who are well and do well" as assessed by clinicians, psychologists and academic staff. These men were followed, via questionnaires, for a period of 35 years from their college days. They were men perceived as physically healthy, to be of independent attitude and of good academic standing located within a competitive liberal

arts college in the USA. The participant group was 268 males chosen from college classes between 1939 and 1944 (1977: p30/1.) Vaillant's work represents a detailed examination of 95 of the participants following personal interviews of 2 hours duration (and data accumulated during the study).

Vaillant, like Gould, is a psychiatrist and his work often demonstrates that perspective. He noted that after nearly four decades of study " ... there is not one of the men who had only clear sailing. Thus ... the focus of the Grant Study became how men adapt to life" (p4). Vaillant recognised the difficulty of defining what "health" meant in the context of the participants, and life generally. For him, "soundness is a way of reacting to problems, not an absence of them" (p6). For this reason, defence mechanisms of psychoanalytical theory seen as "coping or adapting mechanisms" to the circumstances of life (p7) became the primary structure for this book.

Vaillant used the lens of Freudian ego defences as the basis to examine the life stories of these men. This level of detail and technicality does not contribute to the present research study and therefore will not be described or used. It does, however, provide further information through which to examine the life cycle through Vaillant's own relating of his data to Erikson's work.

Vaillant, writing before the publication of Levinson's 1978 study, said that the Grant Study data tended to confirm the adult life patterns proposed by Erik Erikson. Vaillant's results confirmed Erikson's suggestion that life stages had to be passed in sequence, and that a life stage is rarely achieved unless its predecessor had been mastered. Yet within the Grant Study results, Vaillant suggested that the step between Erikson's sixth and seventh life cycle stages, intimacy and generativity, was too wide. A significant focus of work in between, for these men, was on career consolidation – a finding reflected in Levinson's book (1977: p202). Vaillant strongly indicated that new relationships outside the family of origin had to be found and "cemented" before career development was free to occur (1977: p215/6). In the follow-up period of work on early adulthood, Vaillant

confirmed a finding of Gould, that the men "became lost in conformity" (1977: p217), i.e. for all their new found freedom in adulthood, these men used their energy to follow the norms of others, particularly employers. Also echoing research on the exceptional creative individual, and Levinson's (1978) study – the location of and relationship with a mentor in this period tended to make a central contribution to an individual's success (1977: p219 and 339).

Vaillant, like Gould and Levinson, reported that the decade of the forties became a decade where energy focus shifted from hectic work activity to an exploration of "the world within" (p220). Vaillant believed that the suggestion this may arise from an awareness of personal mortality was too simplistic. He argued that it became a time when the men "put aside the preconceptions and narrow establishment aims of the their thirties" (p222) and began to be uncertain of themselves again. He suggested that this decade was a transition period through which new and personal answers (rather than externally dictated ones) must be found. It remained, as echoed by Gould, a period where individuals continued to pull themselves from parental and external restrictions (1977: p224).

Vaillant acknowledged (in a similar way to other researchers' quoted) that this study, based on a male, healthy, academically-able group of individuals from socio-economically privileged backgrounds, was not representative. He suggested that the sample equated to Terman's longitudinal study of 1000 gifted children from California schools. Like Levinson, Vaillant argued that so little, relatively, was known of the period of adult development that the use of a specific group to explore this field was an appropriate contribution to knowledge.

The application to this thesis:

The studies described in part 2 are almost exclusively conducted in the USA, in middle class populations on the east and west coasts. Their authors, Levinson in particular,

acknowledge that their research is placed in a country, class and time period. Levinson (1996) believed that his results applied both generally and widely, over time and geographically. However he acknowledged (like Vaillant) that knowledge on adult lifespan development was limited and argued it was appropriate to use these results to examine and explore other research settings, a view shared by the researcher.

These lifespan studies suggest certain developmental periods that may be experienced by the thesis research participants. The periods and experiences proposed by Erikson's and Levinson's theories of life span development may be used to see whether similar development patterns occur in the participant group – and whether a group acknowledged for creative activity presents a different developmental pattern. For example:

Age Period:	*Focus:*	*Theorist/Author*
6 – 12 years old.	*The development of competence/ability.*	*Erikson*
± 16 years old.	*Identity: focus on "what and who one is to be within the social milieu (and) about ideas and convictions one will stand up for and defend with loyalty and fidelity".*	*Erikson.*
18 – 22 years old.	*A transitionary period on entering adulthood. Choice of career. Initiation of relationships.*	*Erikson, Levinson.*

Part 3 – Theories of Life Span Development of the Exceptional Creative Individual

This part examines the theoretical predictions and research findings on the life span development of the exceptional creative individual. It will also draw on literature considering the eminent and gifted individual. This is a detailed and long standing part of the literature that has provided considerable illumination on the lifespan developmental

experiences of these individuals. It must be said that much of this data is historical and will reflect patterns which may not apply to the context and time of this research sample. The purpose of drawing on this area of literature will be to illustrate and examine the similarities between lifespan developmental experiences of the exceptional and 'localised' creative individuals. This literature draws on many different domains of creative work and these are often shown to involve different developmental influences (e.g. Roe 1953). These developmental influences are potentially quite different to the 'localised' creative individual. However, it does offer an account of what contributes to the development of exceptional creative talent, which may offer parallels in the experience of the ordinary or localised creatives. Given that they are different sample groups further research would be required to confirm any similarities found.

2.4 The Early Years: Childhood and Adolescence

This section focuses on two distinct areas of research which have contributed to our understanding of the early years of those with high and exceptional abilities; first, biographic studies of those who have achieved eminence; second, studies of the development of talent in young people acknowledged as gifted or of high ability. While there are differences, there are areas of commonality in the findings and they provide a sharp insight into the early experiences of these individuals. Data has commonly been presented under the following headings:

Early roots or signs of later creativity

Parental background / social class

Birth order

Home background / environment

Schooling and teachers

Influential adults

Bereavement / illness

These background factors suggest that a large variety of influences can contribute to creative work and eminence (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p181). The factors above represent components of the family and social environment. The growth of creativity in a young person suggests the effects of powerful nurturing and support. The experiences of early life are indicators rather than predictions of what may follow (Walberg et al 1980: p225, and Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993). Even the absence of indicators in this time period does not rule out development that may follow (Albert 1992a: p11). While the 'starting point' of creative work may be hereditary, genetic, or physical components in the potential that it provides the individual (including the psychological capability), the contribution of the early environment to creative work is crucial, and usually combines with this background (Cox 1926: p56-8; Simonton 1978: p187; 1983a: p156; Albert & Runco 1985: p339; Simonton 1991: p270; Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p2; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p53). Many of the most influential environmental factors examined by these authors are included in the list of headings given above. These factors appear to have the effect of supporting or potentially blocking the transformation of a 'gift' into an active ability (Albert 1980b: p174; Albert & Runco 1985: p333; Albert 1992a: p10). For example, Albert (1980b: p174) writes: "Most of the explanations for differences between promise and fulfilment point to substantial differences in the early facilitating environments, family factors, and educational-career opportunities". While some authors argue that prodigious talent is the norm for exceptional individuals in these early years, others conclude that what is actually seen is the development of talent and ability into something which the individual can then use creatively in subsequent work (Bloom 1985; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p155).

2.4.1 Early Roots or Signs of Later Creative Work

The earliest sources of investigation into the lives of exceptional creative individuals (which are generally based on historical and biographical sources) propose that their interest in a particular area and talent was commonly evident, if not prodigiously so, in the

childhood years (Terman 1954: p225; Lehman 1953; Roe 1951a; Simonton 1984). Ochse (1990: p69), Bloom (1985) and Delcourt (1993: p26) all add a further perspective on this - that the talent was often reflected in, and supported by, the interests of some other member of the family, commonly the father. This interest, which often becomes a 'love' or a 'passion' is also described as a positive indicator of subsequent later achievement (Delcourt 1993: p26). While this appears to be a dominant view within the literature, Csikszentmihalyi (1996: p178-9) reports a contrasting position. In his study of the lives of 91 living exceptional individuals he wrote: "for every seamless unfolding from childhood into old age there is another whose later career seems to be the product of chance or of an interest that appears strongly out of nowhere long after the early years are past".

The application to this thesis:

To investigate whether and in what ways do the early signs of later creativity appear in this participant group? For example, does prodigious talent emerge early, or later in life?

2.4.2 Parental Background and Social Class

A large amount of data on parental background and social class comes from the Galton (1869) and Cox (1926) studies. Due to its historical nature, and the changed social conditions some element of caution is in order. The data from these studies has been subject to more recent scrutiny, and is summarised in Simonton (1976: p219) and Ochse (1990: p57). Additionally, Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993: p70), Goertzel et al (1978: p 80) and Delcout (1993: p26) all reach the same conclusion - that the largest proportion of these familes were from middle and upper classes. They conclude that the advantages of this position and the associated income undoubtedly smoothed the path into education and opportunity. However, in Csikszentmihalyi's (1996: p171) more recent work[4] 30% of the parents of the 91 individuals in his study were of immigrant or blue-collar origin,

[4] Covering a wide range of domains, including sciences, writers – authors and poets, teachers, artists, composers, the media and performers.

suggesting that the social background of individuals in more recent times does not necessarily exclude access to education. Zuckerman (1977: p157[5]) and Ochse (1990: p61) propose that it is the professional rather than the economic status of the parent that provides the powerful influence - an environmental role model of interests and working practices, which will be discussed below.

The application to this thesis:

What are the social class and occupational background of parents of research participants? How do they contrast with those of the exceptional creative individual?

2.4.3 Birth Order

One of the most enduring conclusions of the study of biographies of those who have achieved eminence is that there is an over-representation of those who were first-born, or only children. (This is also reflected in studies of the gifted, e.g. Albert 1994: p293.) Studies as early as Galton (1869) raise this issue. Of the 306 biographies of historically eminent individuals studied by Goertzels et al (1978: p85) 47% of subjects (143) were either only children (51) or the first born (92). Additionally, they propose that when children are widely spaced by birth within the family, then each child shares some of the advantages of being first born (p87). There is an unresolved debate over what the gains received by the child actually are. One suggested is the level of attention and stimulation from adults is as yet undiluted by the presence of younger children (e.g. McCurdy 1957: p451/2). Simonton (1987: p136-8) suggests that the number of influencing variables are too large to be conclusive, and that all we can know is that birth order is influential. He also indicates the incidence of birth order changing in different areas of occupation and achievement, e.g. creativity vs. leadership, where first-borns were less in evidence.

[5] Reprinted in Albert 1992a.

The application to this thesis:

What is the relationship between birth order patterns and creativity in this participant group?

2.4.4 Home Background and Environment

John Dacey and colleagues (1989a) argue that the family lives of creative people differ from those experienced by others. Other authors echo this work, e.g. Albert (1996a). However, literature in this area is not consistent, and presents something of a paradox. Studies of the development of creative and eminent individuals, and those of the development of talented teenagers suggest that the home background provides focused and detailed support during the young person's development. Studies of the exceptional creative individuals also suggest that this home background may be far from settled and happy.

These homes were commonly places where there was a love of learning and space allowed for support of it (Goertzel and Goertzel 1962: p3; Goertzel et al 1978: p13; Ochse 1990: p64; Dacey and Lennon 1998: p53), where children were stimulated and encouraged into exploring and learning activities (Domino 1979: p819-825; Walberg et al 1980: p231; Bloom 1985: p440; Albert 1992: p175; Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p7; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p161). Studies cited below offer practical descriptions and specific details.

Bloom (1985), in a widely quoted study of 125 individuals who achieved eminence across 6 domains, described in some detail the actions of these parents in encouraging and nurturing growth in their children.

- Parents were child-focused, or child-centred, devoting both time and energy to the needs of the talented child.
- They modelled a strong work ethic, a productive use of time, the setting of high standards, and an interest in creative activities, e.g. arts and sciences.

- They located and organised teachers for the talented child when their interest became clear. The teachers were of progressively higher skills, to match the child's development, and combined with the parents, made the process of learning enjoyable, challenging and safe.
- Areas within the home were set aside for the child's work, practice and development - and they were commonly excused from finding work outside the home.

These young people were commonly given the freedom to explore and find their own interests (Delcourt 1993: p26) and parents placed strong emphasis on building and developing the child's chosen interest (Goertzel and Goertzel 1962: p6). These findings are echoed by Dacey and Lennon (1998: p55). In the absence of a network of support and encouragement the young people commonly reported lower qualities of experience and performance in their skill development (Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p173). Where the parental focus was on academic grades, rather than learning, the young person reported perceptions of pressure rather than encouragement. In a home of a lower social class parental influence and encouragement was seen as particularly necessary to support the child's development against a poor or socially marginal background (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p163).

These descriptions may suggest a harmonious home background. This was by no means necessarily the case. Biographies of historical genius' and creative achievers suggest that it was common for these individuals to be sternly and even cruelly raised, (Ochse 1990: p77-8). Home life was described as "more correct than warm", with close ties or intimacy conditioned on achievement (Gardner 1993: p361/7). While the 'facts' may not be available to check, it is clear that this was the perception of many of these individuals. Mackinnon (1960/1992[6]) writes: "persons of the most extraordinary effectiveness had life histories marked by severe frustrations, deprivations and traumatic experiences". Goertzel and Goertzel (1962: pgs 30-55-130) describe irritable, explosive

[6] Reprinted in Albert 1992a.

and changeable environments, with opinionative, often failure-prone parents in over 50% of all cases they reviewed.

What are the consequences of these negative experiences? Goertzel and Goertzel (1962: p132) suggested that the home experiences were often reflected in, and became part of the type of creativity produced, e.g. in actors and writers drawing on the conflicts found in their home. The experience and witnessing of this environment, and often parental failure, they suggest may free the creative individual from fears of failure they might otherwise have developed (p79, and Goertzel et al 1978: p37).

The application to this thesis:

The home background and experiences of participants will be examined to see to what extent parents in this participant group model working practices and personal interests for their offspring, and support the young person in finding and learning their interests.

2.4.5 Schooling and Teachers

What level, and how much education have creative and eminent individuals received? McCurdy (1957: p451) reports that the quality of education available to the exceptional creative individual, or genius, tended to be high. Re-examining Cox's (1926) data, Simonton (1983a: p151) found that this changed with discipline, yet commonly terminated at the equivalent of first-degree level, or immediately below this [7] (i.e. the second of three planned years at University). Additionally he found that the more education and training received by an individual in this group the less likely they were to achieve eminence. He speculated why this might be the case and concluded that the highest levels of training and education might prompt a reduced level of flexibility, or increased level of dogmatism not otherwise associated with creative work (Simonton 1987: p148/9). Yet a later study (Simonton 1992) reviewing key figures in American psychology would appear to

[7] For scientists, philosophers, writers, artists and composers within this group (p152).

contradict that view. Simonton found that higher degrees were achieved earlier and generally from prestigious institutions amongst this group. There are, therefore, no proven links between education and achieved creative eminence. Additionally, there are well-known examples of eminent individuals who were poor students, e.g. Albert Einstein and Bill Gates.

Both historical studies of eminent individuals and more recent studies of the development of talented children illustrate a common and significant disaffection in their experience of school and the classroom (e.g. Goertzel and Goertzel 1962; Ochse 1990: p88; Dacey and Lennon 1998: ch4.) A range of problems are mentioned: boring curriculum, dull or cruel teachers, bullying (Goertzel and Goertzel 1962:p241-4); a significant estrangement between creative pupils and their teachers (Torrance 1963: p12); a wish by the teenagers not to be doing what they were doing (Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p180-1); there being no perceived effect of school, even high school, on the individuals (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p173); and that teachers personally and occupationally face practical difficulties in altering these circumstances (Dacey and Lennon 1998: p75/6). A number of authors (Albert 1992a: p12-3; Goertzel and Goertzel 1962: p246; Goertzel et al 1978: p-337; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p173) imply or speculate directly that schooling appears to seek to level-down students to a common group, that the performances they seek and accept are limited - and in the act of doing this they threaten or limit the *developmental opportunities and potentials of talented and gifted individuals.*

The positive effects of schooling are consistently found in the contact with a certain type of teacher or mentor. The teacher who proves a major influence on development will move beyond an institutional 'role', and into a more direct, personal approach to teaching (Roe 1951, 1951a, 1953; Walberg et al 1980; Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p180-1; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p173-4). These teachers often 'role modelled' a level of interest in a subject that may otherwise appear without purpose, or as boring, and did so in a way which proved inspiring to the younger person. They engaged children actively by their

teaching style, and were respectful of the results achieved by them (Torrance 1983: p72-78). The challenges provided by the teachers were carefully paced with the skill level already achieved by the young person (Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p184-5). The influential teacher demonstrated an individual concern and caring for the young person, providing additional activities which allowed a development of skill (Torrance 1981: p55; Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p188; Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p173-4). A common theme that ran through this work is that the teachers "recognised" a talent in the young person, and, with these other factors, drew out that ability (Torrance 1986: p112).

The power and contribution of these teachers was seen as crucial. Walberg et al (1980: p226-7), in a review of 282 historical figures, found 63% significantly influenced by a teacher. Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993: p177) sees the contribution of the teacher as an inevitable and essential practicality - the young person's ability must be guided by adults "greatly gifted in the ability to catalyse potential into durable achievement". Csikszentmihalyi (1992: p29) states this even more directly: "talented children can grow into talented adults only by metabolising the attention of parents, teachers, coaches, mentors ....". Albert (1992a: p15) describes the impact of teachers on the exceptional individual: working with these individuals opens them to the "crystalizing experience", the experience that leads to a commitment to a particular type of work and career - which provides them with support to sustain their aspirations and involvement in this work - and which through this relationship creates a "reality-based sense of identity and competence". The contribution of teachers is also reflected in that of other influential adults and role models.

The application to this thesis:

To investigate the level of education these participants reached, their experience of schooling and teachers and the relationship between these factors of creative development.

2.4.6 Influential Adults - Role models - Mentors

The contribution provided by teachers is also found in and extended by other adults. In research sources they are described as influential adults, role models, or mentors.

Encounters with such adults often occur in the lives of eminent and talented individuals. Walberg et al (1980: p228-9) highlights the different types of adults who act in this role, which they found in over 60% of the lives of their eminent individuals. Ochse (1990: p71) and McCurdy (1957: p458) highlights that there was a "plentiful supply" of adults who acted as role models, commonly occupying "prominent and responsible positions in the community". Simonton (1978: p189 and 1983: p354) argues that the larger the number of role models for "possible imitation" the greater the impact on creative development. Torrance (1961, 1983 and 1995) describes the frequency with which mentors are found (46% of participants in a study), and how this proved one variable which correlated with creative achievement. Also using the term "sponsor" or "patron", he described their contribution as: "Regardless of their own views, (they) encourage and support talented individuals in expressing and testing their ideas .... They protect individuals from the counter-reactions of their peers long enough to permit them to try out some of their ideas. They keep the structure of the situation open enough so that the originality can occur".

Walters and Gardner (1986: p137) describe the contact with such individuals as often the source of the "crystalizing experience" which relates the young person to their area of talent and provides the basis, the motivation, for further developmental work.

The application to this thesis:

Were influential adults and role models present for this group of participants? What was the contribution they made?

2.4.7 Bereavement

A further factor often found within the lives of the genius and exceptional creative individual is the experience of bereavement in the childhood and adolescent years. Eisenstadt (1978) is the commonly quoted source of this data from his study of the biographies of over 500 eminent individuals. He defines "orphanhood" as the loss of one or both parents by death. These findings reveal a loss of a parent at an early age for an acknowledged creative individual was 2 - 3 times more common than in the general population. For example, in a group where exact information on parental death existed, 28% of individuals lost a father by 10 years old, and 34% lost a mother (p 214). Eisenstadt was examining historical data so he also checked as far as possible whether these percentages remained accurate with changing mortality rates over time (i.e. against a background of increasing life expectancy). He found that with the data available to him, these estimates remained unchanged. Csikszentmihalyi (1996: p167) reports similar percentages in his study of living creative individuals.

Two theoretical positions are offered to explain the effects of bereavement. The first suggests that the young person has to face and struggle with feelings of loss and insecurity. For some, these difficult experiences will lead to compensatory energy being channelled into efforts of achievement and mastery - in an effort to stabilise an insecure and unclear environment the individual may also put effort into the performance of a skill and creative task. This struggle to cope with loss, and to resolve gaps, tension and discontinuities to the point where a new 'order' is reached is, conceivably, a creative experience (Eisenstadt 1978: p220/1, Albert 1996: p46/7). The second position offers a related yet alternative view. The loss of a parent presents circumstances where the young person may take on new responsibilities within the family environment, and possibly experience freedom to be and act in ways not previously open to him or her (Eisendsadt 1978: p220, Ochse 1990: p77, and Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p167).

The application to this thesis:

What was the experience of bereavement in this group of participants and what was its perceived impact?

2.4.8 Illness

In addition to bereavement, eminent individuals also commonly experience significant levels of illness in their early years. Within the biographic samples examined by Goertzel and Goertzel (1962) and Goertzel et al (1978: p127)[8] approximately 25% of the group suffered serious or chronic illness in their childhood years. They theorise that these young people were "necessarily isolated from their peers, at least for considerable lengths of time, and spent more time alone, which meant they had more time for reading and introspection and often had close associations with intellectually stimulating adults" (1978: p127).

The application to this thesis:

What was the experience of illness in this group of participants and what was its perceived impact?

2.4.9 Interpreting the Contribution of the Childhood and Adolescent Years

There is disagreement in the literature on whether the development of talent actually witnessed in the childhood years is that of "creativity". Csikszentmihalyi (e.g. 1996) would argue that since creativity is socially-acknowledged achievement of novel and appropriate change, then what occurs in the childhood years is actually the development of skill and talent, which may later be converted or developed into creative action. Keegan (1996: p58) reflects theories from Weisberg (1993 and 1988) by suggesting that creativity emerges from a developed skill and normal thought processes - and against that background the development achieved in the early years cannot be separated from the

[8] 714 biographies in total.

overall development of creativity, even if creativity appears subsequently. Whatever it is, part of the time, which goes to learning knowledge and skills of the domain, in childhood and adolescence is a necessary period of apprenticeship towards creative achievement (Gardner 1993: p369–372).

There are a limited number of variables within the early years that are known to facilitate the development of talent and creativity. Crucial amongst these appear to be socio-economic status, certain parental characteristics, the quality of relationships with parents, and relationships with influential adults or role models (Albert 1996: p44, Csikszentmihalyi 1993: ch12).

The standards of education, and the pressure to achieve a conformity or norm, generally a low one, within the school environment are thought to inhibit the translation of a gift into an active talent and creativity (Goertzel 1978: chapter 12; Albert 1996: p44).

Three theoretical/research may act as a framework through which to examine research results.

First, in her extensive review of existing research on the life backgrounds of the genius and exceptional creative individual, Ochse (1990: p160/1) proposes a model of factors forming a developmental pattern for creative individuals which integrates a number of the factors cited above:

- The acquisition of values related to intellectual achievement (coming via parents, school, society, history and/or fictional heroes).

plus

- Precocious development of intellectual ability or a talent (via genetic endowment and intellectual stimulation).

plus

- Stress - caused through such factors as bereavement, physical disability, psychopathology, loneliness, rejection or insecurity.

(She suggests these combine:)

- Leading to persistent independent intellectual ability, and a desire to excel.
- Resulting in a wide-ranging knowledge and skill in a particular domain.

Second, Bloom (1985) in his study of the early years of individuals who had gone on to achieve eminence described factors which accord with the systems theory described earlier (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1988, 1999).

He proposed:

- Parents provide a model or example to a child by following their own interests, by the working practices they adopt and/or by the experiences they expose the child to. (Stimulation from the "field" in which the child finds itself.)
- Where a child is attracted to a domain of skill, the parents then provide emotional and practical support in the form of encouragement, transportation and time to provide this development to the child. The parent will commonly locate a teacher able to stimulate the child at that point in their development. Emphasis will be on fun, work and discipline in their exploration of the domain. Yet the child will commonly outgrow the teacher – and the parents maintain their support via the location of further teachers who can keep pace with the young person's stage of skill and personal development.

Third, Helson (1987) speculates that before the young person can develop creative ability they need to arrive at an identity that is clearly separate from the parents – and that the child must be supported in this separate identity. The above structures will be used to examine the experiences of participants in this study.

Each of the above three perspectives will be used to consider and analyse the results of research data. This completes the review of childhood and adolescence – the first of four life stages to be considered. Section 2.5 below moves on to the second life stage – early adulthood.

2.5 Early Adulthood

This section reviews literature describing the pattern of development found in the lives of the exceptional creative individual during the early adult years (approximately 18 – 35 years old). It will draw on a range of theoretical sources including:

- biographic research (e.g. Gardner 1993, Roe 1953);
- research into the contribution of role models (e.g. Zuckerman 1977);
- theories and research on motivation and creativity (e.g. Amabile 1996 and 1997);
- research on the patterns of productivity – the quality and quantity of output (e.g. Lehman 1953);
- and patterns of recognition and achievement (e.g. Gardner 1993 and 1999; Feldman 1999).

Therefore, unlike the review of childhood and adolescence period which had a large amount of material drawn from a relatively small number of sources, this section on adulthood and work draws upon a composite of theories and sources in order to achieve a perspective on the events of this period. The review will cover:

The choice of work focus and career.

The Componential Theory of Individual Creativity.

Patterns of learning a domain.

Role models and influential adults.

Productivity and recognition.

2.5.1 The Choice of Work Focus and Career

Around what time might the creative individual in a localised context choose or relate to their area of work? The common, even stereotyped view is that the exceptional creative individual will locate and start working in their chosen work area during the childhood and adolescent years (Ochse 1990: p94/5; Simonton 1992: p81; Gardner 1993: p361;

Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p200). Will it be the same for this research sample? With the exception of the last author cited, all the referenced material refers to historical data. The choice of creative domain is portrayed as precocity, an early displayed ability. Csikszentmihalyi (1996), in his study of living creative individuals, presents a more mixed view. He suggests that for every individual who found their area of interest early in life there were others who found it much later. Roe (e.g. 1951a) also portrays different patterns through which an individual's work is discovered. She found individuals who changed subjects studied and work direction at university under the influence of strong and powerful teachers. For some, Csikszentmihalyi found, the confirming or pivotal experience is college and university education where they confirm their personal preferences and make a choice of vocation (1996: p182). So, while a choice of work area may be made in childhood and adolescence, it is by no means the only route.

Viewing this question through the framework of Gardner's different types of creative behaviour, we are also looking at how individuals gravitate towards different domains and symbol systems (1993: p373/4 and 1999: p220 – 222). As an example of an "influencer" pattern: Gandhi's use of "texts and talks represented an effort to paint a convincing picture of the experiences of a group of people: he built a model of current beliefs and behaviours within a group, as well as a model of how to change them through the mounting of certain pivotal performances ranging from ritual to high stake" (1993: p373).

With the choice of a work area made, generally by the early twenties, it is possible to examine what the literature tells us then occurs on the path to recognition for creative work.

2.5.2 The Componential Theory of Individual Creativity

What happens both in the social context and in the individual in order for creative work to be produced? In particular, what may have triggered the choice of domain, and what else must be present for creative work to result?

The systems model, described earlier in this review (section 2.3) provides an overview of what happens in the social environment. Teresa Amabile (1983, 1996, 1997) has proposed a well-known three part componential model of individual creativity suggesting three factors need to be present for creativity to occur in the creative individual, whether it is in the "ordinary" or the exceptional. This theory is seen in the work of Renzulli (1986). It is also embraced within the larger framework proposed by Sternberg and Lubart (1991). The researcher has drawn on ideas from the componential theory to elucidate what we might expect to see develop in the individual over a passage of time.

Amabile's theory proposes three components need to be present for creativity to occur in any domain (1997: p42/3):

1. Expertise (also called domain relevant skills).
2. Creativity skills.
3. Task motivation.

Expertise comprises the factual knowledge and technical skills of the domain reflected in the thinking patterns and behaviour of the individual (1996: p85; 1997: p42).

Creative thinking reflects "skills (which) include a cognitive style favourable to taking new perspectives on problems, an application of techniques (and/or "heuristics") for the exploration of new cognitive pathways, and a working style conducive to persistent, energetic pursuit of one's work" (1997: p43).

Amabile proposes that it is the first two components that determine what a person is capable of doing. It is task motivation, the third component, which determines what the individual will actually do. She differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is characterised by being driven by "deep interest and involvement in

the work, by curiosity, enjoyment or a personal sense of challenge". Extrinsic motivation is "driven by the desire to attain some goal that is apart from the work itself" (1996: p115).

Amabile's original conception of the role of motivation was "the intrinsically motivated state is conducive to creativity, whereas the extrinsically motivated state is detrimental" (1983: p91). While her research and experiments have convinced her of the key place and influence of intrinsic motivation she now recognises that some extrinsic motivators can act synergistically with intrinsic motivation rather than being controlling influences which may stifle it. For example, clearly defined project goals, frequent constructive feedback and reward and recognition for creative ideas (1996: p117) are seen as extrinsic motivators which support intrinsic motivation. These are responses from the external environment which confirm or focus competence without being seen as controlling. Amabile terms these synergistic elements as "extrinsics in the service of intrinsics" (1996: p118).

This model proposes that "the levels of the three components for an individual's attempt at a given task determine that individual's overall level of creativity on that task" (1983/1996: p95). If any component was not present, or only present at low levels, then Amabile predicts that the outcome will either not be creative or only so at low levels. If all components are present at high levels then the outcome may be expected to be creative. Amabile suggests that motivation must come first to initiate action in each case (1996: p113).

The researcher proposes to assess whether and in what way aspects of each of these components emerge in a participant's life story as a career develops – specifically to look at domain expertise, motivation and work-based creativity and change skills to see at what point participants start working in the domain for which they subsequently show creativity, what the nature of their motivation for this work is (i.e. intrinsic/extrinsic) and at what age they start demonstrating creativity/change skills in this domain. This is not a test of Amabile's theory, but a use of its conceptual structure to explore the unfolding of creative

work in an individual life. The researcher hopes to examine how an individual relates to and works in a domain within the systems model of creativity – and how that relationship is influenced (positively or negatively) by the "field". (For example, how an individual gains access to a domain, and in what way they may develop the relevant domain and creativity skills.)

The literature review now examines what would be seen occurring within the individual work in more practical terms.

2.5.3 Patterns of Learning a Domain

Generally after entry to a domain of work, a concentrated period of learning will follow where the focus is on acquiring domain-relevant skills. Each domain of work will have its own structure for learning, teaching, coaching and evaluating work. The characteristics of domain knowledge will vary and have a consequent impact on the method and process for knowledge acquisition (Simonton 1991a: p831; Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993: p103 – 113). There will, therefore, be distinct patterns for this research group of creative influencers that must be observed and identified.

Gardner (1993: p364 and 1999: p216) and Feldman (1999: p173) argue that it takes approximately ten years of learning to acquire domain-relevant expertise that reflects mastery, and up to another ten years for a creative breakthrough to occur. Therefore, in considering the achievement of recognition and eminence, the question is when did their career commence, and therefore at what point could mastery and creative work be considered likely to be evident? For individuals with a reputation for creativity in a localised context the time scales may be expected to be different than those described by Gardner and Feldman. A research task will involve identifying in what way.

Part of the process of learning domain-relevant skills will involve the development of a personal working style. The exceptional creative individual is characterised by hard work and an obsessive commitment to work that may be at the cost of friendships and

family relationships (Gardner 1993: p364/5). Other characteristics of a working style may include energy, commitment, focus, and perseverance in order to produce great work. It is predicted that the level of these characteristics would be influenced by personal motivation for the task (Feldman 1999: p175). Csikszentmihalyi (e.g. 1996) views this level of commitment in a different manner – he sees it as a function of the apportioning or allocation of attention. He argues that the individual only has so much attention available to allocate in daily life, and that areas that are cared about will attract higher allocations of attention. This research project will examine patterns of learning in a sample of localised creative individuals, and the characteristics of their personal working style.

2.5.4 Influential Adults and Role Models

The earlier findings reported in section 2.4 (childhood and adolescence section) saw that influential adults (in the "field") play a key part in the development of the exceptional creative individual. The same applies to early adulthood.

To learn a skill and capitalise on a talent, some form of support from others in the context is necessary for purposes like instruction, encouragement and mentoring (Albert 1992: p126). The nature of the contribution of these influential adults is varied. Zuckerman's (1977) frequently cited work on scientific Nobel laureates provides a detailed articulation both of the contexts and contribution of the role model and influential adult. She makes clear that these eventual laureates knew enough of their domain of work to seek out both the institution and person with whom they wished to work and study – that they "had a discriminating eye for the masters of their craft as well as for the major universities ... doing work at the frontiers of the field" (p159). Their role model, in turn, actively sought out bright and able individuals to join them in their work. The future laureates not only gained detailed knowledge from their "master", they acquired a socialisation. This included "more than is ordinarily understood by education or by training: it involves acquiring norms and standards, the values and attitudes, as well as the knowledge, skills

and behaviour patterns associated with particular statuses and roles" (p163). Through this the future laureates gained the ability to assess their own work to demanding standards, and became "even more confident of their own abilities than before" (p167). Subotnik and Steiner (1994: p54) summarise the contribution of the influential adult as moving the younger person from being "the novice to expert".

Gardner (1993: p384/5) proposes both affective and cognitive influences in the shape of another person able to act as a "confidant". This would be someone who would offer unconditional support (affective) and an understanding (cognitive) that explored and gave feedback on the nature of their work.

Two studies by Dean Simonton (1983b, 1984c) provide further indications, albeit tentative, of the influence of older adults in the context of the younger person. In a study of 772 artists Simonton (1984c) evaluated the influence of a range of relationships found in the social context – these being "paragons, masters, parents, rivals, collaborators, associates, friends, co-pupils, siblings, apprentices and admirers". Paragons ("those whom the artist admired, imitated, emulated, copied, idolised or was otherwise influenced by") and associates ("acquaintances, contacts, fellow members of movements or societies but who could not be considered rivals, collaborators, co-pupils, friends or siblings" emerged as the most influential on the eminence of the artist (1984c: p1275). In the case of the paragons it does raise the implication that an eminent person can be influenced by individuals they have not had direct contact with. In a study of intergenerational influences on 342 hereditary monarchs Simonton (1983b: p361) found clear signs of a role-modelling effect where behaviours were drawn from influences, such as the father and the grandfather.

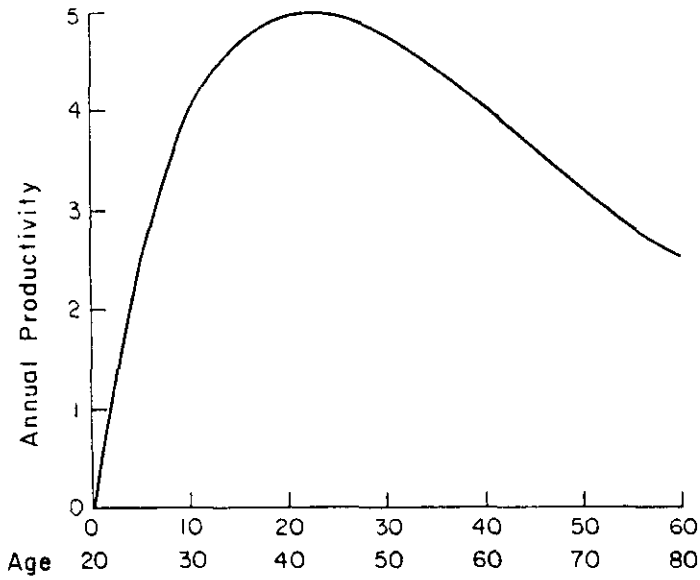
This literature review describes a range of potential contributions made by an influential adult and role model to the creative individual. This research project will examine the presence and contribution of such adults to the creative influencers in this sample.

2.5.5 Productivity and Recognition

We now examine patterns of productivity in work, and subsequent recognition in the life of an exceptional creative individual.

The productivity in a creative career has generally been represented through three principal issues. First, a graphical representation indicating how creative output may develop and change over the course of a career. Second, how productive precocity, longevity and the volume of output may be linked. Third, the potential links that exists between the quantity and quality of output, i.e. between productivity and creativity.

One of the most enduring results of research into the relationship between creative output and age is that this is represented by an inverted, backward, 'J'-shaped graphical curve, illustrated here.



This curve rises rapidly at the start of the career of an exceptional creative individual, rising to a career peak at some point in the second decade (early thirties to early forties), then reducing gradually until output represents approximately half the rate that existed at

the peak (e.g. Lehman 1953; Simonton 1984, 1994). The location of the career peak and the extent of the subsequent decline will vary with the domain of achievement (e.g. Lehman 1953, Lindauer 1992 and 1993). These interdisciplinary or inter-domain contrasts appear to hold historically, and cross-culturally (Lehman 1962). The volume of literature presenting these characteristics and the extent to which these conclusions have been checked in various pieces of research argues powerfully for the existence of this pattern. Simonton proposes (1988: p252) that the enduring nature of this pattern in research suggests the influence of psychological and social "universals" affecting this creative work, such as patterns of information processing, ideation and elaboration, rather than other determinants.

However, other influences on patterns of output and recognition over time will now be considered. It is widely acknowledged that patterns of output amongst contributors to a domain are heavily skewed – that a small percentage of contributors will be responsible for a major part of the work (Simonton 1988: p253, 1988a: p405). For example, the top 10% of contributors will be credited with approximately 50% of all major contributions, whereas the bottom 50% will be credited with approximately 15% of the work. Those that make the most contribution will generally start production when young, produce into old age, and produce at above average rates, i.e. those who start early, persist over time and produce at high rates will be those who produce most.

The link between the quantity of output and quality has also been examined. The research and arguments of Lehman (1953) and Dennis (1966), two of the classic pieces of research in this area, suggested they are very different, and that comparing quantity and quality was not comparing 'like with like'. Yet Simonton has argued consistently for a number of years that the age curves for the quantity and quality of work are identical (e.g. 1988: p254, and 1994: p184). Simonton constructed these arguments based on examination of the production patterns of major and minor works in short blocks of time, e.g. 5 year periods of an individual's career. He proposes that the more a creator produces

the more chance that the creator will produce a major work: "... the period in a creator's life which sees the most masterpieces also witnesses the greatest number of forgotten productions" (1988: p254). Following Dennis (1966), Simonton has termed this the "constant-probability-of-success" model, e.g. (1977: p797; 1988a: p410; 1991b: p120). Simonton's writing claims a clear link between quantity and quality of production. His correlation figures vary, however, and his research suggests it is a "probabilistic link", a term Simonton also uses.

Age is another key landmark associated with productivity and the exceptional creative individual. Simonton (1991a: p829) proposes that the age at which a career associated with a domain of work starts, is the date at which the creative process begins. As an additional model to capture what is underlying this activity, he also proposes that what is involved is a two-step information processing model of ideation and elaboration – developing creative ideas, and the work necessary to move those ideas into creative products. If the constant-probability-of-success model holds, then the faster works are produced at the beginning of a career, the earlier a "hit" may be expected to appear. (1991a: p830). Viewed in this way, Simonton has started to move the debate away from chronological age to career age. Through this he argues that, in addition to the date at which a career begins, and the rate of production, the nature of the domain and the creative potential of the individual will influence the pattern of work and development that follows.

The question is whether any of the criteria associated with productivity and recognition will transfer into the careers of individuals creative in a "localised" context. Since the size of the productivity curve (and implicitly that of recognition) is associated with output, a reduced level of creative potential, (in contrast to the exceptional creative individual), would suggest a lower rate of contribution, a shallower curve, and a lower and slower level of recognition received overall. Simonton, (e.g. 1994) is the only author traced by the researcher of this thesis who examines output curves for "low potential" creators. The source of Simonton's calculations in presenting these potential output

curves is unclear. Yet they argue for a slower or more gradual start to the career – the need for a period of skill development and consolidation – a longer period by virtue of lower productivity to reach the notable first creative work. He proposes that the career peak is still broadly in the same age range as with exceptional individuals, yet the decline post-peak is more gradual in contrast to the exceptional creative individual. Given the apparent low level of examination of patterns of productivity and recognition in samples other than exceptionally creative individuals this research project will seek to establish data in these areas.

The application to this thesis:

Career choice and commencement: Around what time did the creative individual locate and chose their domain of work? What was the role of factors in childhood and adolescence, or university-level education period?

A componential theory of creativity: What is the role of motivation, domain relevant knowledge and skills, and creative/change skills in the development of this sample? Can this thesis illuminate anything about the emergence and interaction of these three components over time/the life span (domain-relevant skills, intrinsic motivation and change skills)?

Learning the domain: After entry to a domain of work what patterns of learning domain-relevant skills are apparent?

Influential adults: Are influential adults present in the narratives of participants? What is their contribution to the work development of these individuals?

Productivity and recognition: What patterns of productivity in work, and subsequent recognition, may been seen in the life of these participants?

Having examined the first two of the four life stages, the next section moves on to consider the midlife decade.

2.6 The Midlife Decade (35 – 45 years old)

The midlife decade and the transition seen within it have emerged as a recognised period of adult development (Levinson 1978, 1996; Vaillant 1977; Gould 1977; Roazen 1976). It was the characteristics of this decade and Jaques's (1965) research paper on changes to creative activity that first attracted the researcher to this subject area. The interest and research in the midlife period dates from the 1960s approximately, with a peak of interest demonstrated in the literature occurring between 1965 and 1980. However, Willis and Reid (1999: p.xv) suggest that there are few scholarly examinations of this subject. The relative recency of this interest in this area can be understood in the context of a life expectancy in 1900 being 50 years old, compared to 70 years for males in 1980 and 78 for females (Hunter and Sundel 1989: p8). The interest in the midlife period can also be seen as an evolution of the work of Sigmund Freud in childhood, and Anna Freud and Erik Erikson on youth and adolescence. In the early 1970s, there were relatively few conceptualisations of development in adulthood. Neugarten and Gould argue there was an assumption that the issues salient to childhood were projected forward into this time (Neugarten 1969: p121, Gould 1979: p2). This section of the literature review will examine earlier literature on the midlife period, update it with more recent work, and consider the potential impact on creative work in this time period.

Levinson (e.g. 1978 and 1996) argued the midlife transition was a five-year period from 40 – 45 years old, with a small variance in the ages at which midlife was experienced. However, others argue for a longer period of focus (e.g. Moen and Wethington 1999: p4; Oles 1999: p1059). This section will therefore look at a full decade (35 – 45 years old) to embrace these wider views.

A number of general adult development studies have considered the role of creativity. One of the earliest articles concerning the midlife (Jaques 1965) examined it

from the standpoint of the impact on the creative lives of artists. The work of Levinson et al (1978) also comments on the potential impact of midlife on creative work.

It is a period called a "transition" by some, a "crisis" by others. The perspective of a crisis occurring in this period has undoubtedly come from some of the journalistic publications of the work on this period, which appears to have slanted the understanding of the meaning of this life period (e.g. Reid and Willis 1999: p277). This review focuses on this period as a transition. A transition is defined as: " ... a change which moves the person from one position or stage to another" (Brim 1976: p4), which may involve various psychological and social adaptations (Hunter and Sundel 1989: p19). For Levinson (1996: p69) it also included elements of ending and beginning, or initiation with an underlying move towards "individuation". While the principle theorists use the word "transition" they also acknowledge that a crisis can occur within a transition. There is a debate, which will be reviewed later in this section, on whether the midlife transition is a phenomenon or phase experienced by everyone. A classic influential article on this subject (Jaques 1965: p506) suggests that it is an experience "which manifests in some form with everyone".

2.6.1 The Characteristics of the Midlife Transition

This period is described as containing a range of possible experiences that are physical, psychological and social in origin. There is a high degree of commonality of the descriptions contained in the earlier and more recent literature, e.g. Oles 1999: p1059. No single event or occurrence is recognised as the starting point of the transition, and they may be experienced in any order. While these characteristics represent the way the experience of the midlife transition is reported, more recently (e.g. Moen and Wethington 1999: p21) they are being written of as reflecting the "multiple meanings of age" – the ways in which it will be encountered and experienced. A range of possible midlife characteristics will be looked for in this thesis sample.

Physical:

The period of this decade marks a peak of physical maturity and strength that is passed and a progressive loss commences, albeit small. Signs of ageing appear, such as wrinkles, grey hair, weight gain and changes in the sexual drive. These changes may be noticed by the individual with the realisation that "we are no longer young" and that there is a limit to the future of their body (Neugarten 1969: p121/2; Kets de Vries 1978: p47; Gould 1979: p2; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p34/5; McAdams 1993: p198; Dunn 1999).

Also at this time increased incidences of stress, alcoholism, addictions, psychosomatic illnesses and a hypochondrical concern over health have been reported by different authors (e.g. Jaques 1965: p511; Rosenberg and Farrell 1976: p153; McIlroy 1984: p625). The incidence of serious medical conditions begins to rise at this time, particularly in men. Individuals' health and experience of health will impact the transitions and decisions that occur in this period (Moen and Wethington 1999: p8).

Social:

An acknowledgement of the changing social dimension of the midlife decade in an individual life (e.g. the impact of growing and increasingly independent children) must also take account of changing social experiences over time. For example, authors such as Butler and Neugarten were writing about ageing in the 1960s' from a perspective of ill health and the management of difficulties. In contrast, Sheehy (1995) writes from the perspective of health and added life span. Wills and Reid (1999: p.xv) acknowledge that the "baby boomers" entering the midlife decade and middle age represent the best educated generation in history to-date. These factors will shift the social elements of the midlife decade over time. There are also core social experiences which authors suggest stay common. These are reviewed below.

The midlife transition is a period involving potential social and relationship change. For example, it is a time when an individual's parents will be ageing and may be moving

into a period of dependency or dying. Such experiences raise demands on the individual in the midlife decade, or can provide 'models' of the ageing process which may influence subsequent decisions (Brim 1976: p6; Moen and Wethington 1999: p9). Children will be entering a period of increasing independence or distance from parents through adolescence or leaving home (Jaques 1965: p506; Neugarten 1969: p121/1 and 1979: p890; Gould 1979: p2; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p34/5; McAdams 1993: p198; Levinson 1996: p385; Moen and Wethington 1999: p7; Whitborne and Connolly 1999: p36/7; Rosenberg et al 1999: p58; Reid and Willis 1999: p278). These authors suggest these events and experiences influence and/or limit the decisions available to an individual, potentially negatively, in developing their life from this point.

Neugarten theorises that a significant part of the midlife transition experiences are socially influenced – that an individual's social context provides messages, signs or measures of the "time" by which certain things are expected and anticipated within a person's life. These messages are a natural part of the social context. She proposes that one source of midlife tension is the comparison of actual life with what society communicates as expected at this time – is the individual in an age-appropriate category of behaviour and stage of life? For example, expectations could include the points that an individual is expected to reach in a career, earning power, or peak productivity (Neugarten 1968: p146 and 1969: p121/2; Bardwick 1978: p132; Kets de Vries 1978: p50/1; McIlroy 1984: p625; Moen and Wethington 1999: p4).

Psychological:

Many of the most cited characteristics of the midlife transition in literature are psychological or internally experienced. The focus on psychological characteristics and experience is a part of the life course or life cycle perspective on adult development (Moen and Wethington 1999: p13). The physical and the psychological characteristics are theorised as interacting (Rosenberg et al 1999: p56).

The midlife transition is commonly described as a period of re-evaluation. It has a number of potential sources. There is often a practical recognition of what has been described as the "aspirations – achievements gap" (Brim 1976: p5). The hopes and plans from early adult life and career are weighed against what has actually been achieved. For many individuals there is a gap between the two which has two implications. First, the realisation of what has been achieved compared with what the individual hoped and was possible. There might have been a failure to reach aspirations despite their efforts, or a failure to attempt or risk what is necessary to attain them. Second, what opportunities, if any, exist for closing the gap between aspirations and achievement in the time remaining to the individual (Levinson 1978: p192; Gould 1979: p2; Kets de Vries 1978: p45; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p37; McAdams 1993: p198; Levinson 1996: p377)?

A number of authors (e.g. Brim 1976: p5; Levinson et al 1978: p200; Kets de vries 1978: p48) also refer to the realisation in the individual that some parts of their selves have not been 'lived-out' as a consequence of the life chosen to-date. The causes may be practical, such as the demands of career or family, or social such as following of traditions or restrictions that exist in the individual's context. "Some parts of oneself have been neglected in the maturation process and some parts may never be fulfilled" (McIlroy 1984: p625). Whatever the cause, there is a possible weighing-up or comparison of the person they have become in comparison with the individual they dreamed of being earlier in adult life.

Erikson's seventh stage of adult life (Generativity vs. Stagnation) is also described as spanning this period. The experience of this stage is suggested by Erikson to provide an impetus or questioning for how the individual might nurture or develop the next generation. This may take the form of the development of individuals that form the next generation or creative products or work that may influence them (Kets de Vries 1978: p48; McAdams 1993: p202/3). Neugarten (1969: p121/2) uses an unusual expression in describing the task as also involving the "creation of social heirs".

Of a more direct and difficult nature is an experience or realisation that death has become a personal reality to the individual. Elliot Jaques (1965: p506) discusses one of the paradoxical experiences of the midlife in describing the recognition that as we enter what in many respects may be a "prime" of life, "... the prime and fulfilment are dated. Death lies beyond ...". Gould (1972: p530 and 1979: p4) suggests that the awareness and acknowledgement of personal mortality will confront and alter belief systems about safety, particularly those behaviours which we believe will create it, (e.g. if I am successful, or invest work in certain relationships I will never feel helpless again). Death has changed from being a "concept" to a personal matter (Neugarten 1969: p121/2; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p34/5).

With or without a more personal experience of death, one of the commonest reported experiences of the midlife transition is a changing orientation to time. As the individual reaches a time approximating to an anticipated midpoint in life, time is restructured into a sense of time-left-to-live rather than a time since birth. Another way in which it has been stated is "there is only as much time left in the future as there is time in the past" (Gould 1979: p2/3). One of the consequences of this in the individual is a recognition that not all that had been hoped-for in the life span will be accomplished, that only a finite amount can be achieved and that much may have to remain unfinished and unrealised. This is described as a creating a sense of time-urgency (Jaques 1965: p507; Neugarten 1968: p97; Brim 1976: p5; Kets de Vries 1978: p47; McIlroy 1984: p625; McAdams 1993: p198).

The awareness of death also relates to one of the other commonest reported experiences – an awareness of the polarities that exist in life. For example, Jaques (1965: p512) describes it as a realisation that life and mortality exist together, and that this can be mitigated by the positive element of the polarity, by the will to live life. A further perspective that he describes is: "beliefs in the inherent goodness of man are replaced by a recognition and acceptance of the fact that inherent goodness is accompanied by hate and

destructive forces within, which contribute to man's own misery and tragedy" (p505). McAdams (1993: p200) also describes a shift from a belief in "absolute truths" to truths that are situationally specific.

Several authors describe a change in personal priorities as occurring at this time. Kets de Vries (1978: p47) talks of an increased preoccupation with the inner life, introspection, reflection and self-evaluation. For McIlroy (1984: p625) it is an existential questioning of the self, values and life itself. In practical terms it is a taking stock, a seeing of one's self in realistic terms – and depression sometimes results because of shortfalls and disappointments (Gould 1972: p530; Quadrio 1986: p34/5; Reid and Willis 1999: p277).

The work of the midlife transition is the personal facing, confrontation and accommodation of some or all of the experiences described above. These experiences constitute potential "psychological turning points" – defined by Moen and Wethington (1999: p14), after Clausen, as "a new insight into one's self, a significant other or important life situation; this insight becomes a motive that leads to redirecting, changing or improving one's life". This, also, was one of the characteristics of this period that drew the researcher to this subject area, and is examined in research data. The turning points take place against a background of a changed sense of reality, of time ahead, and personal mortality (Levinson 1978: p192). Levinson also argues that these experiences constitute "individuation", a growing exploration and sense of who the individual is as a person, what they want, as well as what the realities of the world and life are really like. The midlife transition is the process of reconciliation of gaps in the life structure, and the actions that are needed to close them.

Outcomes of the midlife transition and impact on creative work:

Different authors write about the way in which the midlife transition experiences " ... challenge us to recreate our identities in ways that enhance our sense of unity and purpose

in life" (McAdams 1993: p202). This involves the individual working through unresolved problems of earlier life (Jaques 1965: p511) or revising beliefs and goals for the future (Pankey 1998). Jaques (1965: p506) makes a sweeping statement of what he considers the outcome of the midlife transition to be: "the achievement of mature independent adulthood presents itself as the main psychological task". What does this mean?

This means that the re-evaluation and assessments described create a confrontation with aspects of the life structure not serving the direction desired by the individual and the opportunities that may exist to change. These can be parts of the life structure, such as job or relationships, or attitudes and values that have been developed or taken-on in adult life (Gould 1979: p3). Gould also suggests that working on these issues is the quality of "heaviness" that can characterise the midlife transition; the results or subsequent decisions can represent its associated growth or 'flowering'.

The common themes that emerge from reported experiences of the mid-life period are:

- A personal questioning and re-evaluation, and changes in the individual's sense of self. (Jung 1933, Erikson 1958, Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996; Quadrio 1986, Neugarten 1969, 1976).

- A recognition or awareness of the commencement of physical decline. (Jung 1933, Erikson 1958, Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996).

- A recognition of personal mortality - or the ceasing of its denial. (Jung 1933, Erikson 1958, Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996).

- A recognition of personal needs, hopes and ambitions in contrast to those which have hitherto been 'imposed' in some way externally. (Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996; Stein 1983, Corlett and Milner 1993; Quenk 1993, 1996).

- A new sense of 'time' being limited, and of work or actions the individual seeks to accomplish in the time remaining to him/her. (Wolf 1991)

- A questioning of what form living may take in the time remaining, of what action or behaviours to devote oneself to, and attempts to reshape or redirect one's life accordingly. (Erikson 1958, Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996, Stein 1983, Corlett and Milner 1993; Quenk 1993, 1996).

So far, this review has examined general midlife changes. There are a number of outcomes that may be seen in creative work. Jaques' (1965) paper makes several proposals. He suggests:

- a creative career may come to an abrupt end, for example in the drying up of work;

- creative capacity may show itself for the first time;

- there may be a decisive change in the quality and content of creativeness. (p502.)

- changes are characterised or seen in either the mode or method of work, or its content. (p503.) He suggests that the style of work involves a switch to a "sculpting approach" involving a working and reworking of activity, creating a bigger step between the first inspiration and the finished product. This is rather than the intense and spontaneous work that occurs in earlier adulthood.

- He also suggests that the emerging sense of death and the tragic in the individual will be reflected in the work, in place of the "lyrical" work of earlier life. (p504.)

The application to this thesis:

Research data will be analysed to determine whether and in what way creativity is affected by the midlife and which of the factors described above appear relevant to this sample.

2.6.2 Evaluation and Evidence of the Midlife Transition

The description and theorising of a midlife transition is based on empirical evidence, albeit limited. For example, Levinson's theories, while extensively quoted, are based on only 39 of the 85 men and women in his two studies. However detailed Levinson's data were, this is still a small sample for the extent of his claims. Levinson and Jaques both indicated they made extensive use of biographic material in building and supplementing their theories. The empirical work is largely focused on white middle class Americans living on the east and west coasts, and in distinct periods of time. The empirical work is varied in its nature, and authors disagree on the exact type of these experiences. It needs to be acknowledged that some authors continue to question the existence of the midlife transition, and suggest it is a reflection of the personal construction and presentation of the life narrative (e.g. Rosenberg et al 1999: p47). (The researcher accepts the arguments for the existence of the midlife transition and will be examining evidence in research reports from participants to test this view.) Research into the interplay of these midlife characteristic experiences described in this review is relatively uncommon (Moen and Wethington 1999: p9). Willis and Reid (1999: p.xvi) and Rosenberg et al (1999: p55) propose that no specific transitionary path can be laid out. An individual's experience will be a function of the interaction of biological, psychological, cultural, social and historical factors. They also write that it is this very interaction of factors that makes the midlife an important and challenging area of research.

Despite the doubts or questions raised above, in Jaques' (1965) study of the biographies of 316 painters, composers, poets, writers and sculptors he wrote that there were "few in whom a decisive change cannot be seen in the quality of their work", i.e. in whose work the experience of this crisis could not be seen (p503).

Gould's work (e.g. 1972 and 1979) examining the life span, including the midlife transition, focused initially on hospital psychiatric patients, but moved from there to a questionnaire study of the experiences of 524 healthy people. He acknowledged that his results pictured development at a particular point in time, and that his results might shift with both time and social context (1972: p531).

Kets de Vries (1978: p48) describes a study of Californian managers where over 80% reported an intense crisis as occurring for them in this period of time.

Helson and Moane (1987: p177) in a longitudinal study of 140 women from college though to middle age used a range of psychometric measures of personality to gauge the extent of changes occurring over time. They reported evidence of changes predicted in life stage theory and development and midlife, e.g. decreases in certain measures of femininity and increases in masculinity of interests. They argued that it presented a strong case for patterns of personality change from early to middle adulthood (p185) that were consistent and predictable.

A major trend within the midlife literature is the amount of introspection and reevaluation undertaken by individuals experiencing the midlife transition. Butler (1963: p166) in an influential and frequently quoted paper argues that: "life review is a naturally occurring universal mental process characterised by progressive return to consciousness of past experiences and, particularly, the resurgence of unresolved conflicts" and that these conflicts "can be surveyed and integrated". He argues that the life review at this time is particularly a response to the acknowledgement of the biological and psychological fact of death (p66) and that in its extreme forms can be associated with feelings of guilt, anxiety and despair (p68).

McAdams (1993: p196) argues that whatever the evidence that exists for the midlife transition there are undoubtedly men and women who move through this period either with ease, or without the marked symptoms described in this literature. The research of Keyes and Ryff (e.g. 1999: p161) presents a range of measures of psychological well-being in the midlife years (based on interview research with 316 participants) which endorse McAdams' conclusions that this need not be a painful period. Their research suggests possible increases in self-determination, environmental mastery, choice over purpose in life and a continued desire for growth.

Whatever the results of these studies and the characteristics currently proposed for the midlife transition it needs to be acknowledged that this is a relatively new area of research interest, with comparatively few research studies on which to base the claims of a universal midlife transition. There is a heavy reliance on interview data, and limited amounts of data from other sources. Many of the authors involved acknowledge the influences of gender, social context and class, beliefs, goals and social values (Hunter and Sundel 1989: p15). Women have been under-researched compared with men (Reid and Willis 1999: p279).

Quadrio describes the midlife transition as a contemporary phenomenon influenced by education and disposition – and argues that many will not be inclined to the reflective thought in these experiences (1986: p37). Yet Sheehy (1995: p191) described questionnaire-based research she conducted with 1024 working class respondents. She is unequivocal in her conclusions: all levels of society encounter the midlife experiences – education and income do not 'create' the experiences, they give individuals choices about how to respond to them. Reid and Willis (1999: p279) in a major review of recent research, argue for the possibility of intervening constructively and changing the nature of the midlife experiences described in this section. The researcher had intended to make midlife a major focus of his study but exploratory work revealed that a life span

perspective was likely to be more fruitful. The midlife transition remains within the research focus of this project and the characteristics will be examined from data collected.

This review now turns to examine middle age, the fourth and final life stage examined in this review.

2.7 Middle Age

This section reviews what is known of the experiences of the exceptional creative individual after the midlife period. The age span being considered in this research project is 45 – 60 years old. The literature examined commonly embraces this period and old age as well. The distinctions between them will be brought out as the review is presented.

The sources of the theories presented in this section vary. The largest body of available evidence is product-centred and provides a perspective on how productivity and acclaim for creative work is expected to decline after the midlife period. Beyond the product-centred theory, there are a small number of studies and theoretical examinations which attempt to add further definition to what other 'meanings' can be attributed to creative work other than product output and social acclaim in this time of life. This section will also draw on the changes indicated in the midlife literature and how these are anticipated as continuing and influencing work in this latter period.

2.7.1 The Quantity and Quality of Creative Work in Middle Age

The dominant message contained in product-centred literature and theories is an age-related decline following the midlife decade. It is commonly portrayed as an inverted-J-shaped curve.

The literature on creativity produced in the period 1950 – 1980 appears to have created a potentially stereotypical message that "creativity declines with age". Even if there is a stereotype the evidence that "creative achievement becomes more infrequent

with advancing adult age cannot be ignored" (Kastenbaum 1992: p291). However, the contents and meaning of the earlier literature has now been considered in more depth and proves more complex than this simple conclusion.

The age-related curve described is an average of the patterns found in many disciplines (Lehman 1953. Simonton 1990, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1994, Lindauer 1993). This being the case, there will be some disciplines where the peak and decline is earlier, some later. Lindauer's (1992, 1993) work on artists, for example, portrays a peak to the curve in this field that potentially occurs in the mid-forties or later. Simonton (1990b: p629) argues that for some individuals the curve will not decline at all. Therefore global statements about peaks occurring at a certain age range are misleading. This research project looks for data on the quality and quantity of creative work in middle age in this group of creative influencers.

Simonton (e.g. 1984, 1991) has taken the exploration of the potential meanings of this curve further by using a mathematical perspective. By calculating the area under the curve he argues that the post-peak period of work represents over half of that available to the individual in the span of their career. The declining curve does not, for example, remove creativity – the decline in creativity will not make the creative person uncreative – ample scope for work remains (1990: p103). In the seventh decade work output is still approximately 50% of the peak, and exceeding that of the first decade of work, the twenties. Therefore, any age decline does not make a person devoid of creativity (1990b: p627). As the curve represents an average this will of course conceal very wide individual variations and individual creators may show very different patterns. Simonton acknowledges there will be many examples available which prove an exception to these principles (1991: p14). Therefore we are not considering the possible presence or absence of creativity in this time period, but the characteristics of change that may occur to creative activity in this age range.

There are, however, further patterns within output and achievement to be acknowledged. Three common patterns occur within output of the exceptional creative individual – starting work early, i.e. prodigiousness in childhood, production at extraordinary rates during the career, and working until late in life (e.g. Dennis 1954). Therefore late life potential and activity is heavily associated with early potential (Simonton 1990: p103; 1990a: p324). Simonton also argues that output and achievement are linked. "Quality of output is strongly associated with quantity, i.e. most productive periods are, on average, the same periods in which the most successful pieces emerge" (Simonton 1990a: p323; 1991: p15; 1994: p203). Simonton charted the work curves associated with major and minor work and suggested that "they are basically identical – the period of most masterpieces will also see the most easily forgotten work". For this reason, he argues that continuing output and potential can still lead to significant achievement in later years. This research project will, therefore, examine patterns of the early appearance of work, the involvement in this activity over time, and the ways it may be maintained in later life.

One of the principal reasons proposed for declining achievement and output with age is that of ill health. Nowadays, interference of extrinsic factors can be mitigated with advances in modern medicine (Simonton 1990: p103; 1990b: p627).

There is also some evidence that in certain cases productivity can undergo a renaissance in the later years (Simonton 1990b: p630; 1991: p16). This work does not take output and achievement back to midlife levels, but it does indicate and argue for a potential in later life even when not evidenced by output.

2.7.2 The Late Life Style

The product-centred view offers many perspectives of this age period. There are, however, other bodies of work worthy of examination that are both theoretical and empirical in origin and oriented towards the latter end of middle age and old age.

From a largely theoretical (rather than empirical) position, focused on the work of artists, Cohen-Shalev (1986 and 1989) argued for an examination of what she described as the late life style or the old age style. She proposes that to focus on the quantity of work, or peak and decline, in later life as a measure of what happens to creativity is inadequate. Some other approach is needed which considers the intrinsic features of the experience of ageing, e.g. the content, form, language, style and variation of work in this time period (1986: p1). A primary focus on achievement and social acclaim means aspects of creativity will go unexamined (Kastenbaum 1992: p292). Cohen-Shalev argued for an examination of the "primary aspects" of artistic work "such as themes, formal structure, technique and imagery" in order to go beyond the product-centred perspective of an average of the best years of work (1989: p30). These recommendations also reflect the work of Jaques (1965) in suggesting that work may appear, decline, change content or direction in this period.

Cohen-Shalev acknowledged at the time of writing these articles that the empirical implications of these suggestions needed further exploration. Yet she also argued that the failure to examine the changes that occurred in later life represented a prejudice against ageing and the older individual (1989: p24).

She made initial steps at defining shifts in artistic style later in life – but these lack a level of definition that would support empirical work. She wrote, in a manner that reflects the conclusions of midlife researchers, of an increased focus on the interior life, and a withdrawal into "inner circles of experience", and "an increased occupation with the artistic self and the reconsideration of the meaning of art for one's life and humanity at large" (1989: p33).

Lindauer (1992) extended the examination of late-life concept empirically, again with artists. While acknowledging his findings were not observed in all the artists he examined, he observed three general patterns in late life work: declining reputations, achieving recognition in old age, and artists reputed to have done their best work in old age

(p215). Specifically, he found a number of well known artists (e.g. Rembrandt, Michaelangelo, Titian, Goya, and Cézanne) drastically changed their style in later life, with shifts in technique, composition, subject matter and affective tone (p216).

In reviewing the literature of other researchers Lindauer (1992) found other contributory definitions to the late life style (p217). "A shift from the dramatic, physical, busy, to the more tranquil, inner-directed and darker visions of the older artist. There is a shift to looser, diffuse, less literal understandings." And: "An inner directed and introspective focus rather than action-oriented because of a withdrawal to the inner world of experience." These words suggest, again, a change in focus or process on the part of the creative individual.

Lindauer speculated on potential reasons for this stylistic shift. Recognising that no single reason was likely to explain this change, he suggested it may be a reflection of life stage, decreased concern with success or failure, material ambitions, and/or a reflection of physical, biological or mental breakdowns which influence the perceptions of sight and colour used by artists. He also supported Simonton in the view that it could, potentially, reflect the artist's understanding of declining years and impending death, and a personal portrayal and working out of these experiences.

Munsterberg (1984) in a book that is art-historical, yet quoted in creativity literature, presented a series of case studies which examine the changes to the work of artists that occurred in later life. He described cases where acclaimed work has been produced in old age, as well as the stylistic shifts that can occur in this time. For example, in a study of Michaelangelo's work, he proposed a reason for the style changes: "the artist transcends artistic conventions and gives expression to his most profound and personal sentiments" (p18). He argued strongly, for example, that the experience of ageing was a source of creative inspiration and material to Michaelangelo. (This possibility and principle is also suggested generally by Wyatt-Brown 1992: p339). In several other case studies Munsterberg described work changes that are indicative of changed priorities on

the part of the artist, demonstrate on-going practical and emotional support, and the acknowledgement received in these later years. Simonton (1990b: p627) also proposed that even in the face of illness and difficulty, creative individuals like Bach or Handel would persist in creative work in old age. He called this a "self-actualizing process" that motivates creative workers to overcome the infirmities of age. There is also evidence that not only can a creative person push through the restrictions of illness in later years, but it can also be a source of creative output, (e.g. the work of Goya in later life, examined by Gedo and Gedo 1992: p27).

Munsterberg's studies also concur with the work of Simonton (described earlier) – those who worked well in later life were, generally, but not exclusively, those who started their career early.

Simonton adds two further understandings to the characteristics of creative work in later life, in connection with playwrights and musicians. In a 1983 study of 81 Athenian and Shakespearean plays he proposed that the content of plays reflected the age of the authors. Later plays were found to be more concerned with religious or mystical experiences and the role of God in human affairs. "In the dramatist's later years he evidently becomes less concerned with material goods and more committed to spiritual questions" (p119). He concluded: "it is almost as if the dramatist, through literary creativity, is working out the big questions that all of us must encounter as the end of our lives draw near" (p121).

In a later (1994) study of 1919 works of 172 classical composers Simonton reported that the work of the end of life (a) had shorter playing times, (b) lower melodic originality, and (c) enjoyed higher popularity in classical repertories and were rated as more profound by musicologists. In Simonton's expression composers were saying "more with less" (p209). Simonton speculated on the source of this change in style. He suggested that, aware of advancing age and their musical hopes in comparison with their achievements, they were seeking "a last artistic testament". "This final creation must

wrap up all the loose ends of an all-to-brief existence. The last work must encapsulate the intent of an entire career" (p210). This conclusion was echoed by Cohen-Shalev (1989: p28): "works of elderly artists are frequently described as "last utterances", attempts "to solve the enigma of life", and similarly by Kastenbaum (1992: p299).

Storr (1988: p169 and 1989: p147) links these late life changes in creative style and approach to life span development. He suggested that a creative individual will enter a "third period" of production in the fifties and sixties. (The first period is characterised by learning the craft, and the second by socially influenced production). Working from the perspective that creative work reflects life experiences Storr describes the third period as more inner-directed, or inner-focused. He suggested a number of characteristics seen in many musical, artistic and literary examples:

- "They are often unconventional in form and (...) striving to achieve a new kind of unity between elements (...)".
- "They are characterised by an absence of rhetoric and any need to convince".
- "They seem to be exploring remote areas of experience which are intrapersonal or suprapersonal rather than interpersonal" (1988: p174).

The literature described in this section is indicative of the difficulties of portraying the late life style in enough precision to support empirical examination. This research project does, however, seek data on changes to creative activity in this middle age period (45 – 60 years old) and examine it for characteristics of the late life style.

2.7.3 Further Indications from Self-report/Biographic Study

Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study of 91 living creative individuals has been referred to in the literature review. This study also reports on the experiences of these individuals in "the later years".

Csikszentmihalyi supported questioning the perception of a decline in creative activity over time described earlier and reported that the productivity of his sample did not

decline with age, and that if anything it increased. He also concluded that the capacity for quality to be retained with quantity was present and that memorable work may be produced in later life (p211).

The perception of his participants was that their ability to work was largely unimpaired as they aged, and that their goals remained as significant as they had been in earlier life. Complaints about health or well-being were largely absent from his interviews of participants. Their attitudes to their physical health were largely positive, despite reports of energy loss and the need to slow down. Twice as many reported positive changes as negative ones (p212/5). Abilities associated with crystallised intelligence were perceived as increasing, e.g. "making sensible judgements, recognising similarities across different categories, using induction and logical reasoning" (p213).

A significant positive development in personal traits was reported as "diminished anxiety over performance, being less driven, exhibiting more courage, confidence and risk-taking" (p215). Women reported twice as many positive outcomes as men (p217).

Comments from these participants concerning their relationship to domains of performance were uniformly positive. "It seems the promise of more and different knowledge never lets us down (...) symbolic domains remain always accessible and their rewards remain fresh till the end of life" (p218). Csikszentmihalyi acknowledged a contradiction. These individuals were actively and deeply engaged in work they found exciting until very late in life (the eighties and nineties for some participants). Yet the fulfilment of the work many were engaged in would be unattainable to them in the time remaining. He suggested "these people never run out of exciting goals" (p220). "... there was very little (...) dwelling on past success (...) everyone's energies were focused on tasks still to be accomplished" (p221).

Lindauer et al (1997) have made an important contribution to articulating what else may be happening to the experience and performance of creativity in later years. In a questionnaire survey they asked 88 prominent graphic artists in the age range 60s – 80s to

review the performance and characteristics of their work over time. There were consistent reports of positive changes to the quality, quantity and content of creative work well into the 60s, with only marginal declines beyond that time. The primary reasons described included increased skill and improved techniques that came from on-going learning and the discovery of new working materials (p134 – 136); and increase in time available to them due to a decline in family and responsibilities; and an increased "acceptance of themselves, their work and their abilities" – and an acceptance of others. A "reduced concern with other people's criticisms or evaluations" was also reported as a source of work – the freedom to attempt work they may have previously have been deterred from trying (p139). This presents an important contrasting perspective to the recognised peak of social acclaim that occurs commonly in the first half of the 40s. This research by Lindauer et al could suggest that social acclaim is less of a priority creatively than before – and that other priorities have emerged.

The research data from this research project will also be examined for participants' perceptions of their work in this time period, in contrast to earlier periods of their life.

2.7.4 Conclusions From a Review of Middle Age Creative Activity

These theoretical sources argue that a focus in this time period on productive output and social acclaim is inadequate to portray and understand the events occurring within creative work and the creative process. This time period in the creative adult life is under-explored theoretically compared with childhood and adolescence, and early adulthood. These sources suggest that attention to the characteristics of creative work in this time period, and that the phenomenology of creative work indicative of the experience of ageing would yield new understandings of creative activity. These are views accepted by the researcher and have shaped the manner in which data is interrogated to learn of participants' experiences in this time period.

The applications to this thesis:

The quality and quantity of creative work: What evidence is there, if any, that research participants changed and/or maintained the quality and quantity of their creative work through this time period? What are the changes, if any, in contrast to earlier life periods?

The Late Life Style: Research data will be examined for indications of work that attempts to encapsulate the intent of a career, e.g. participants becoming inner focused/directed – and less concerned with social recognition.

Part 4 – Additional Contributing Theories

This section of the literature review will focus on a range of other theories that could, potentially, explain behaviour otherwise considered "creative". There is the possibility that local creativity is associated with normal and healthy development of individuals or a reflection of other phenomena, or both. Because the primary focus of this thesis is creativity, the focus on these theories will be limited, with the intention of providing some alternative measures of the data encountered from the biographies of participants.

2.8 The Relationship of Creativity to Other Theories

It is appropriate, however, to consider in what ways creativity may be viewed by or even part of other theories. Two in particular provide relevant information: Self-actualisation and flow.

2.8.1 Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation features in the humanistic tradition of psychology and was introduced by Abraham Maslow (e.g. 1970). For Maslow, self-actualisation was the "ultimate goal of human life". It appears at a peak of his hierarchy of needs or motives. These covered two groups, 'deficiency motives' and 'being motives'. These are (from base to peak):

1. Physiological needs (hunger and thirst).
2. Safety needs (a stable and predictable environment)
3. Love and belongingness needs (affection from others; need to be with others rather than alone).
4. Esteem needs (superiority, respect, self-respect).
5. Self-actualisation.

Maslow's view was that until an individual's base needs were met the higher needs would not be prominent (Bee 1998: p33/4).

Due to the emergent nature of needs depending on prior level satisfaction, Maslow saw Self-actualisation as a motive emerging later in life. The needs are organised in a "relative potency" – the stronger needs appear earlier (Maslow 1970: p56).

The task of defining self-actualisation is difficult, as Maslow's theories were phrased in a wide range of broad and often imprecise terms. Self-actualisation happens as the individual moves towards "actualization of potentialities, full potentialities, towards peak experiences" (ibid.: p61). "... the full use and exploitation of talents, capabilities and potentialities" (ibid.: p126). While this writing seems to imply human perfection, Maslow acknowledged that no subject was perfect (ibid.: p127). Maslow considered an empirical case had been made "for the presence within the human being of a tendency toward, or need for growing in a direction that can be summarised in general as self-actualisation or psychological health" (Maslow 1968: p155). Maslow wrote that self-actualising people are distinguished by "the frequency and intensity" of peak experiences.

In peak experiences he believed the individual would be most fully their identity or themselves (1968: p103). He saw self-actualisation as a matter of "degree" rather than an "all-or-none" condition, which he felt allowed a researcher to search biographies or creative or any other individual for episodes of self-actualisation through these peak or growth experiences (Maslow 1968: p97/8).

The words and phrases used by Maslow to describe self-actualisation include problem-centring, autonomy, peak experiences and creativity (Maslow 1970: p128). He appears to have considered that all self-actualised subjects were creative.

Maslow wrote "creativity is a universal characteristic of all people studied and observed", " ...a fundamental characteristic of human nature", "the creativeness appears in some of our subjects not in the usual forms of writing books, composing music or producing artistic objects, but rather may be much more humble." It is an expression of a healthy personality. It "is projected out upon the world or touches whatever activity the person is engaged in". "Whatever one does can be done with a certain attitude, a certain spirit that arises out of the nature of the character of the person performing the act." "I learned to apply the word creative ... not only to products but also to people in a characterological way, and to activities and process and attitudes. And further more I have come to apply the word creative to many products others than the standard conventionally accepted" (ibid.: p142).

Maslow proceeded to define creativity in two separate ways. "... I found it necessary to distinguish "special talent creativeness" from "self-actualising creativeness" which sprang much more directly from the personality, which showed itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life ..." (ibid.: p159). It will be necessary to consider whether this research sample represents one or both of these types of creativity.

Other writers, following Maslow, have added other perspectives and definitions to self-actualisation. Murphy et al (1976: p39) saw self-actualisation "as being identified with integration, psychological health, individuation, autonomy, creativity and

productivity. Self-actualisation is the ultimate goal of man who constantly tends towards growth". These authors perceived Maslow as describing creativity "as one way of expressing self-actualisation". Murphy et al (1976: p40) quoted Shostrom (1967) as describing creativity as actualizing behaviour. This is a perspective reflected in Craft (2000) – self-actualisation as a means of bringing one's own ideas and potentiality into another form, e.g. via creative activity. The researcher will also propose and use means of examining some of these areas of experience within the research population.

Manheim (1998: p101) saw "the distinguishing mark of the self-actualizing person is that she/he has more frequent and more intense experiences of peak moments than the average person". Maslow saw creativity as a route or gateway to peak experiences. Manheim's qualitative research with 65 art students argued strongly for the contribution of art as a form of creativity as "... instrumental in improving life on a daily basis" (p104).

Brennan and Piechowski (1991) attempted to assess self-actualisation in living individuals via depth interviews working on the assumption that self-actualisation related to Dabrowski's structure of personality and emotional development. (Their assumption was that the two theories reflected different constructs of the same underlying phenomena.) The emergent themes or signs of self-actualisation in their view involve a focus on work that benefited humankind, a philosophy of life, working towards personal growth (p53 – 58).

It is important, however, to consider the potential criticisms of Maslow's self-actualisation theory. Maslow's theories were stated in general terms, and consequently are hard to evaluate in a precise manner (Bee 1998: p34). The range of descriptive words used for self-actualisation is vast as well as general and this raises the practical question of how measures can be developed (Cangemi 1976). Brennan and Piechowski (1991: p60) claim Maslow left no case studies of self-actualising people, and no instruments have been developed from individuals that can be judged as self-actualising. These limitations present a major difficulty to the evaluation of self actualisation in this research sample.

Landau and Moaz (1978) have researched the link between creativity and self-actualisation via interviews with elderly people. They operationalized a definition of creativity as "flexibility and originality in responses", and self-actualisation as "making real one's potential". They argued, on the basis of these interviews that there was a link between the two areas and that this was reflected in the approaches taken towards living, and impending death in old age.

There have been some attempts to measure links between self-actualisation and creativity with psychometric measures over the last twenty-five years, e.g. Yonge 1975, Murphy et al 1976. These have met with limited success, possibly because creativity measures were not "sensitive to the unique character of self-actualising individuals" (Runco, Ebersole and Mraz 1991: p60). Using three carefully chosen psychometric measures these authors got strong positive correlations between creativity and self-actualisation supporting Maslow's view of a link between the two areas. The authors acknowledged, however, that the correlations "were significant (but) they do not indicate causality" and that the nature of the link remains unclear.

2.8.2 Flow

The theories associated with 'flow' originated in research conducted at the University of Chicago into the phenomenology of happiness and happy experiences "here and now ... as an on-going process which provides rewarding experiences in the present" (Csikszentmihalyi 1975: p9). Research in this area has subsequently been conducted in other countries, e.g. Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan and Australia. The activities studied in the early work included athletes, artists, musicians, chess masters and surgeons, (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: p4). Csikszentmihalyi is specific that the underlying structure of the flow experience (described below) has been found in thousands of interview reports compiled in studies that have included "ordinary people" (p48). "In sum, optimal

experience, and the psychological conditions that make it possible seem to be the same the world over" (p48).

The researchers found quickly that the intrinsic motivation for participating in an activity rated more highly than extrinsic motivation. These included the enjoyment of the experience of the activity, the use of and development of skill "allowing the participant to refine his abilities in a particular area, to increase his control of a given aspect of the environment" (1975: p14 – 16).

This research found that the importance of intrinsic motivation was related to age (i.e. increased with age), and with higher socio-economic groups and education. They recognised this as fitting Maslow's theories (p18 – 20).

A surprise to the early researchers was the range of activities that induced these happy experiences – subsequently termed "flow". The activities included friendship and relaxation, risk and chance, competition, and the creative dimension ("designing or discovering something new") (p27).

The words used to describe these activities very quickly began to relate to those commonly used to describe creativity. For example: "the underlying similarity that cuts across these (intrinsically motivated) activities, regardless of their formal differences is that they give participants a sense of discovery, exploration, problem-solving, in other words a feeling of novelty and challenge". " ... (these activities) are all exploring the limits of their abilities and trying to expand them." One of the most important elements of these activities is "the challenge of the unknown, which leads to discovery, exploration, problem-solving ... and which is essential to activities like composing, dancing (and others)" (p30). "Discovery and exploration imply transcendence – a going beyond the known, stretching of one's self towards new dimensions of skill and competence".

Csikszentmihalyi argues that "in a variety of human contexts ... one finds a remarkably similar inner state, which is so enjoyable that people are sometimes willing to

forsake a comfortable life for its sake" (1975: p37). Csikszentmihalyi's writings (1975, 1990, 1997) suggest seven characteristics:

Table 2.5: Characteristics of the "Flow" Experience

Characteristics of "Flow":	**Source:**
Presence of a Goal:	
Achievement of a goal	1975: p38
Goal directed – and a need for appropriate responses.	1990: p48; 1997: p28.
Feedback	
There are clearly established rules for action.	1975: p39; 1990: p48.
Clear and unambiguous feedback is involved with the task.	1975: p46.
There is immediate feedback.	1990: p54; 1997: p28.
Balancing Challenges with Skill	
Tasks are within the individual's ability to perform.	1975: p39
A specific set of skills is involved.	1997: p29.
Opportunities for action are evenly matched by capabilities.	1975: p50.
Intrinsic Motivation	
The individual is intrinsically motivated. They need no goals external to the self.	1975: p47; 1990: p67; 1997: p56/7.
A sense of purpose.	1997: p56.
Action and Awareness (Concentration)	
There is a loss of ego/self-forgetfulness experienced.	1975: p42
A loss of self-consciousness.	1975: p42; 1990: p62.
Transcendence of individuality	1975: p42.
Fusion with the world	1975: p42.
Merging action an awareness	1975: p38.
Concentration on the task in hand.	1990: p58
Unpleasant issues of life are forgotten.	1990: p58
The clearly structured demands of the activity impose order and exclude the interference of disorder in consciousness.	1990: p58
Sense of Control	
A paradox of control.	1990: p59
A sense of control.	1990: p59
A lack of worry over losing control.	1990: p59
The possibility of control rather than its actuality.	1990: p60.
Sense of Time	
Transformation of time.	1990: p66.
Time no longer seems to pass in the way it ordinarily does.	1990: p66.

The potential relationship between creativity and flow make it important to attempt to assess the presence of flow experience in the research data. This will be described in chapter 10 of the research results.

2.8.3 Creativity, Flow and Self-actualisation

Maslow writes in a manner that argues that Self-actualisation involves and possibly embraces creativity. We have to consider the possibility that Self-actualisation and creativity are synonymous. Csikszentmihalyi acknowledges 'flow' is found in the work and experiences of creative individuals. Therefore can it be asked whether Self-actualisation is also synonymous with flow? This section will examine ways in which these theories overlap in their nature and definition.

Csikszentmihalyi and Maslow both write in terms that in many ways almost equate their respective theories with the act and experience of creativity.

Both Csikszentmihalyi and Maslow cite Ghislen (1952), a classic book on the creative process, as a source of descriptions of their respective theories. (Csikszentmihalyi 1975: p37; Maslow 1970: p163). Csikszentmihalyi argues strongly that "almost any description of creative experience includes experiential accounts that are in important respects analogous to those obtained from people at play" – and that the experience of 'play' is central to his examination of 'flow' (1975: p37). Maslow equates Self-actualisation and creativity and points out that boundaries between work and play becoming blurred (Maslow 1970: p162). When reviewing the experience of 'flow' Csikszentmihalyi was explicit that the same experiences are reported by individuals engaged in creative activities (1975: p44; 1997: p39).

There is a clear theme running through theories associated with each of these areas acknowledging the presence and positive influence of intrinsic motivation (e.g. Amabile 1983, 1996; Maslow 1970: p60 and 136; Csikszentmihalyi 1990: p3, 1997: p121).

A central part of self-actualisation theory is the aspect of peak experiences. Maslow writes of peak experiences in terms that are reminiscent of certain comments on flow. For example: peak experiences involve "the loss of placing in time and space" (Maslow 1970: p137). Whatever the nature of the peak experience "the subjective experience is described in the same way" (Maslow 1970: p163). "An essential part of the peak experience is integration within the person, and therefore between the person and the world" (ibid: p163). "Everything that then can be done with unusual ease and lack of effort. Inhibition, doubt, control, self-criticism diminish towards a zero point and he becomes the spontaneous co-ordinated efficient organism ..." (ibid.: p164).

The researcher believes that creative activity is related to self –actualisation and flow. Maslow makes a useful distinction in defining creativity. He suggests 'genius' or 'eminent' creativity is more commonly associated with "special talent creativeness" relating to a domain of performance whereas "self-actualizing creativeness" shows "itself widely in the ordinary affairs of life" (1970: p159). Maslow proposed that self-actualizing creativeness could be expressed in a diversity of domains, including motherhood, psychiatry, cooking etc, (Maslow 1970: p46; Mittleman 1991: p115). The work, reputation and contribution of this research sample relates to a domain of activity in a localised setting. It suggests, therefore, that this form of creativity may reflect lower levels or early development of special-talent creativeness.

Chapter 10 of the research results will examine whether in addition to creativity the biographies of the research participants can be related to theories of self-actualisation or experiences of flow.

2.8.4 Creativity as "Health"

A further perspective on the nature of creativity considers it as a naturally occurring state within all individuals which is associated or equated with "health" – i.e. creativity is experienced in psychologically healthy individuals, and its absence would signify at least

an undeveloped individual. Maslow's theories considered Self-actualisation to be an expression of psychological health. By implication creativity is then considered by Maslow to be an expression of health as well.

Rogers (1961: p351) considered creativity to come from the same force or energy within individuals which constituted health and personal wholeness - "man's tendency to actualise himself, to become his potentialities". He described this further as the "directional trend which is evident in all organic and human life - the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature - the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, or the self".

The characteristics or conditions within an individual which produced or allowed a creative act were, according to Rogers, openness to experience, an internal locus of evaluation, and the ability to toy with elements and concepts (p353/4).

Rogers (1961) and Winnicott (1980)[9] both suggested that natural creativity may be inhibited by adverse experiences. Rogers wrote: "This tendency may become deeply buried under layer after layer of encrusted psychological defence; it may be hidden behind elaborate facades which deny its existence; it is my belief, however, based on my experience, that it exists in every individual, and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed" (p351).

If creativity is a natural result of health, is it possible to turn this connection around, and ask what impact creativity will have on health? In a study of 25 elderly individuals indicated a correlation between creative attitude, and positive coping with the phenomena of ageing (Landau and Maoz 1978). The skills and use of psychodrama were assessed as relieving depression in a study group of elderly psychiatric patients, and supporting their resolution of old problems (Carman and Nordin 1984). Lorenzen-Huber (1991) proposed, from a study of 20 elderly individuals, that continued use of creative skills supported an experience of satisfaction and meaning in life, and the achievement of developmental

[9] Quoted in Martin 1991.

tasks. Further studies offering similar conclusions include Smith and Andersson (1989), Smith and Van-der-Meer (1990), Dudek and Hall (1991).

Carol Ryff and her colleagues have been examining definitions of psychological health over an 18 year period (e.g. Ryff 1982, Ryff and Heincke 1983, Ryff 1984, Ryff 1989, Ryff 1991, Ryff and Essex 1992, and Keyes and Ryff 1999).

Ryff has made two significant steps. First she has attempted to offer 'operational' definitions of how theories of writers such as Maslow, Rogers, Jung and Erikson may appear in human behaviour. Second, she has constructed research that has elicited participants' own definitions of psychological well-being and healthy ageing. (Her participant group, over time, in this work has numbered well in excess of 1000 people.)

One of her interview-based studies provided examples of these theories. Ryff (1989) obtained a range of data from 171 participants including positive past experiences and conceptions of positive functioning in middle and old age. Experiences associated with marriage, family and education were rated top in considering positive past experiences in middle age, yet with work and career-related matters were also often mentioned (by 40% of respondents). The respondents' conceptions of well-being and what it means to be "well-adjusted" in middle and old age gave most emphasis to being others-oriented, confident, assertive, self-accepting and self-knowledge.

In a more recent piece of research (Keyes and Ryff 1999) a "multidimensional formulation of well-being" is proposed which incorporates elements of Erikson's and Maslow's theories and research mentioned above. It has six categories: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.[10] These dimensions were developed into self-report scales and tested for "internal consistency, stability over time, and convergent and discriminant validity", (p166). The data gathered from several studies using these scales indicated an increase in the percentage experiencing these categories from youth to middle age where a high-point

[10] These categories will be defined in full in the final results chapter.

of experience was recorded. The path from middle to old age, as pictured by these scales, differed slightly with some of the studies Ryff conducted. While some studies indicated stability in the level of experience between middle and old age, others indicated decline – with the exception of 'self-acceptance' which held or continued to grow. Keys and Ryff's factors will be used to examine research data in chapter 10, given their potential relationship to health and self-actualisation.

It is appropriate to acknowledge that there is a wide body of literature that considers and even claims that creativity is associated with ill-health (notably bi-polar disorder as a constructive response to repression). For example, Runco and Richards (1997) offer a wide range of papers that illustrate the potential association of these two factors. Within the context of this thesis it has not been possible to use any direct measures or search for illustrations of ill-health in participants.

The application to this thesis: The categories proposed by Keyes and Ryff (self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth) will be used to evaluate the interview responses of research participants to examine whether the experiences of middle age may relate to healthy ageing and self-actualisation as well as creativity.

Part 5 – Research Questions

2.9 Research Questions and Focus of Analysis

The literature review influenced the research questions now asked. The contribution of exploratory empirical work to shaping research questions will be described in greater detail in chapter 4. However, questions explored in this thesis are described below in order to provide the reader with an initial understanding of focus and direction.

In summary:

- The research participants have a reputation for creativity (novelty, originality and usefulness) in their work in a localised context (e.g. an organisation).
- These participants come from a range of occupations, but may be defined as "influencers" in Howard Gardner's conception of this term. This is an aspect of creative work that has received very little attention to-date as most research in the area of creativity focuses on people who produce tangible products.

The study of the development of creativity across the life span presents an immediate challenge in understanding the emerging research data. Examinations of living creative people across the life span are relatively rare, e.g. Roe (1951, 1951a, 1953) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). For this reason the extent and sources of existing research information against which to examine or contrast data from this study will change with each life period.

A General Life Span Developmental and Social Systems Perspective

The periods and experiences proposed by theories of life span development will be used to assess whether or not these occur in the participant group – and whether they may be different for a group acknowledged for creative activity. For example: do Erikson's 4th and 5th stages, concerning competence and identity, appear? Do the transitionary periods proposed by Levinson appear? How is the early adult life structure different between 'ordinary' and 'exceptional' individuals?

In addition, the author proposes to use the social systems perspective in a localised context – to examine when and in what way participants locate their domain of activity, and in what way they can be said to impact or change their 'field' of work.

The Early Years – Childhood and Adolescence

There is a substantial body of existing research data on the development patterns of "exceptional" creative individuals in their childhood and teenage years. This enables a detailed contrast to be made between "ordinary" and "exceptional" individuals. Thus one set of research questions concerns:

1 (a) What early development patterns seem significant in ordinary creative individuals?
(b) How is this different from those found in normal life span development and exceptional creative individuals?

Specifically:

- In what ways do the early signs of later creativity appear in this participant group?
- What are the parental backgrounds and social class of participants in this research?
- What are the birth order patterns in this participant group?
- What are the home backgrounds and experiences of participants? To what extent do parents in this participant group model working practices, model personal interests, and support the young person in finding and learning their interests?
- What level of education did these participants reach? What was the experience of these participants of schooling and teachers?
- Were influential adults and role models present for this group of participants? What was the contribution they made?
- What was the experience of bereavement in this group of participants? What was its perceived impact?
- What was the experience of illness in this group of participants? What was its perceived impact?
- In each case, how does this compare with the experience of the exceptional creative individual?

Early Adulthood: Post-schooling to the on-set of the midlife period

The pattern of experience of "exceptional" creative individuals in this period has to be inferred from case study research and research work examining the quality and quantity of creative work over time.

2 (a) How did "ordinary" creative individuals locate and develop a domain of creative activity in early adulthood?

(b) How does this compare with the practices of "exceptional" creative individuals and normal life span development?

Specifically:

- Career choice and commencement: When did the creative individual locate and choose their domain of work? Was this in childhood and adolescence, or in the period of university-level education?
- Influential adults: Do the narratives of participants suggest the presence of influential adults? What is their contribution to the work development of these individuals?
- Learning the domain: After entry to a domain of work what pattern of learning domain-relevant skills is apparent?
- A componential theory of creativity: How do domain-relevant knowledge and skills, intrinsic motivation and change skills arise and interact in this group?
- Productivity and recognition: What patterns of productivity in work, and subsequent recognition may been seen in the life of these participants?

The Midlife Period (35 – 45 years of age)

Empirical research data on the character and effects of the mid-life period is limited in general, and for creative individuals in particular. For this reason two generally phrased research questions have been constructed, rather than implying a direct comparison between the two types of creative individuals.

3 Will participants experience events predicted in the literature for the mid-life period?

4 Will individuals alter or change their creative activity as a result of the experiences of the mid-life period?

Literature data is summarised in the following tables. Research data will be analysed against these criteria.

Table 2.6: "External" midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: "External" (Social / family / workplace.)	Literature Source:
Relationship changes: (children becoming more independent, parents becoming dependent). Employment:	Jaques 1965: p506; Neugarten 1969: p121/1 and 1979: p890; Gould 1979: p2; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p34/5; McAdams 1993: p198; Levinson 1996: p385; Moen and Wethington 1999: p7; Whitborne and Connolly 1999: p36/7; Rosenberg et al 1999: p58; Reid and Willis 1999: p278.
- A decision to change employment.	Levinson 1996. Moen and Wethington 1999.
- The end of one career, the beginning of another.	Levinson 1996.
- The loss of a job. The end of job progression.	Corlett and Milner 1993.
Continuity or discontinuity with the past.	Moen and Wethington 1999.

Table 2.7: "Internal" midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: "Internal". (Feelings, the physical.)	Literature Source:
Personal questioning and re-evaluation:	Jung 1933. Erikson 1958. Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996. Quadrio 1986. Neugarten 1969. Stein 1983. Corlett and Milner 1993. Quenk 1993, 1996. Gould 1979. Moen and Wethington 1999.
- Recognizing failures in self-development.	Levinson 1996
- What actions or behaviours to devote oneself to.	Levinson 1996.

Midlife Characteristic: "Internal". (Feelings, the physical.)	Literature Source:
Recognition of ageing and physical decline.	Jung 1933. Erikson 1958. Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996. Quadrio 1986. Neugarten 1969. Gould 1979. McIlroy 1984. McAdams 1993. Dunn 1999.
- Recognition of personal mortality.	Jung 1933. Levinson 1978, 1996. Jacques 1965. Brim 1976. Neugarten 1968. McAdams 1993.
- A sense of time ahead being limited.	Jacques 1965. Wolf 1991.
Recognition of the 'aspirations and achievement' gap.	Brim 1976. Levinson 1978, 1996.
'Desocialization'. (Recognition of personal needs, hopes and ambitions in contrast to those that have been 'imposed' or expected in some way externally.)	Brim 1976. Levinson 1978, 1996. Stein 1983. Corlett and Milner 1993. Quenk 1993, 1996.

Table 2.8: Midlife characteristics in the personal/background context:

Midlife Characteristic: Personal background/context	Literature Source:
Are midlife changes/experiences 'expected' or 'unexpected'? (Predictability is suggested as supporting preparation for the transition. Unexpected changes may prove harder to respond to.)	Moen and Wethington 1999. Wheaton 1990 White and Edwards 1990
Is there evidence of personal 'success' in earlier life? (Assumed to reduce the intensity and/or make midlife experiences more positive in outcome.)	Moen and Wethington 1999.
Is there evidence of a personal 'dream' in early adulthood? (Assumed to reduce the intensity of midlife experiences.)	Drebing and Gooden 1991

Table 2.9: Predicted changes to creative work following midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: Changes to creativity or creative activity.	**Literature Source:**
Generativity vs. stagnation. (A focus on the 'legacy' to the next generation. Nurturing those that follow. Or an increased focus on creative products.)	Erikson 1958.
Creative work/career may cease.	Jacques 1965.
Creative capacity may show itself for the	

Midlife Characteristic: Changes to creativity or creative activity.	**Literature Source:**
first time.	Jacques 1965.
A change in the quality/content of creative work.	Jacques 1965.
A change in work method.	Jacques 1965.

The Middle Age Period, to 60 years old

As with the mid-life period, empirical research data on the character and effects of the post mid-life period is limited and especially for creative individuals. For this reason two perspectives have been adopted. First, the search for emerging patterns of behaviour and activity in this time period. Second, a relatively new focus of research has been chosen for exploration – that of the "late life style". This offers indications of what may happen in later-life in the practice of the arts, music and literature. This project considers whether these findings are true for "ordinary" creative individuals and if they occur in other fields of activities examined as part of this work.

5 (a) In what ways will creative activity change in the period of "middle age"?

(b) Do these individuals display any evidence of the "late life style" in this research group?

Drawing on research associated with the exceptional creative individual:

- The quality and quantity of creative work: What evidence is there, if any, that research participants maintained the quality and quantity of their creative work in this time period?
- The Late Life Style: Research data will be examined for indications of: work that attempts to encapsulate the intent of a career – "attempts to solve the enigma of life"

participants becoming inner focused/directed – and less concerned with social recognition.

Chapter three will describe the research method used to examine these questions.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In summary, this chapter will:

- 3.2 Describe the characteristics of the research process used in this project.
- 3.3 Outline the background and use of interviewing as a research method.
- 3.4 Discuss the research design used in this project including:
  - 3.4.1 The aims of the research design.
  - 3.4.2 The interview structure.
  - 3.4.3 The use of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator.
  - 3.4.4 The process of analysis.
  - 3.4.5 The participant population
  - 3.4.6 The ethical considerations associated with research of this sort.
  - 3.4.7 The verification processes used for interview data.
  - 3.4.8 The place of the researcher and how it may contribute to the outcome of this research.

3.2 The Research Paradigm

The research focus of this thesis is on life span developmental patterns in 'ordinary' individuals with a reputation for creative output within their local context. It aims to increase understanding of the experience of creativity across individual lives, especially creative life in the later years (i.e. 45 years old plus)[1]. It goes on to contrast the experiences of the

[1] Possibly "post-peak" as defined by the theories and research of creative productivity and achieved social acclaim

"ordinary" individuals in this sample with those found in the development of "exceptional" creative individual – and life span developmental theories.

The research methods used are qualitative in nature. Miles and Huberman (1994: p253) suggest the "hallmark of qualitative research is that it goes beyond *how much* there is of something to tell us about its essential *qualities*". (Italics are in the original text.) Gruber (1989: p6) argues the study of that uniqueness (those "essential qualities") is central to a serious study of creativity and many creative researchers have used case studies to examine these qualities and uniqueness (e.g. Gruber 1989, Gardner 1993). Mitroff (1983: p158) asserts that the mind attempting to know the mind of another requires a phenomenological approach to research – an approach that underpins certain traditions of qualitative research. This research uses a phenomenological approach. Drawing on Lang (1996: p156) it:

- Accepts knowledge as individually and socially constructed.
- Attempts to understand the meaning of social phenomena in the terms of the "actor" and in their context.
- Rejects, through this, the notion of a "single truth".
- Validates ordinary experience.
- Embraces multiple perspectives, enriched by dialogue, inter-subjectivity and collaboration.

The research in this thesis examines development patterns and the lived experience of "ordinary" creative individuals through the use of interviews.

An open approach is also necessary because it is uncertain what, if any, the key developmental factors are for 'ordinary' creative individuals. In an earlier, classic study Roe (1951: p1) states that "since one does not know what factors may prove effective one must try and observe as many as possible". She saw a consequence of this as an inherent limit to the

number of participants which can be worked with on such a study, given that most researchers have limited time.

3.3 The Use of Interviewing as a Research Method

The interview was the main means of gathering data. Interviews have been defined as conversation with a structure and purpose (Dexter 1980, Kvale 1996). In comparison to the conversations of everyday life, "the research interview is characterised by a methodological awareness of question forms, a focus on the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee, and a critical attention to what is said" (Kvale 1996: p20). The essential purpose of the interview in this research is to understand the biography, the lived world from the perspectives of research participants, and to construct that understanding in the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. The phenomenological intention is described by Spradley (1979: p34): "I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way that you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand this?"

Stated from a different perspective, Lincoln and Guba (1985: p268) provide a practical definition of the purposes of interviews, which have been applied to the present study. These purposes are:

- *Here and now constructions*: to understand persons, events, activities, organisations, feelings, motivations, claims and other entities of participants.
- *Reconstructions* of past experiences.
- *Projections* of what they expected to experience in the future.

- *Triangulation* to verify information (constructions, reconstructions and projections) obtained from other sources, human and material.
- *Member-checking* – the verification of constructions developed by the inquirer.

The researcher has used all of the above in interviews in this setting.

Interviews can be characterised by their degree of structure, their degree of overtness, and the quality of the relationship between the interviewer and the participant. An "open" interview structure has been used in this study. This is where the content of response is left with the interviewee. Lincoln and Guba (1985: p269) propose that the choice of structure is guided by the extent to which a researcher or interviewer can be confident of knowing the content of an outcome. For example, an open interview structure would be used where a researcher did not know in advance what was significant, and was therefore maintaining an open stance with respect to data from interviewees. As this reflects the position from which this study has developed, an open interview framework has been used in this research project.

In preparing for the interviews, the researcher drew on Kvale's (1996: p88) seven stage model for an interview investigation:

1. *Thematizing*: formulating the purpose and content of the topic to be investigated. Knowing why and what is to be done, before the "how" is determined.
2. *Designing*: planning the design of the study, taking into account the needs of all seven stages, and both the knowledge it is intended to yield, and the ethical implications of its operation.
3. *Interviewing*: conducting the interviews, based on an interview structure or guide, and a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and obtained.
4. *Transcribing*: preparing the interview material for analysis, which commonly involves a transcription of the spoken to the written word.

5. *Analyzing*: utilizing a method of analysis, based on the purpose of the study and the interview material.
6. *Verifying*: determines the qualitative research equivalents of 'reliability' and 'validity'.
7. *Reporting*: communicating the results of the study in a scientific manner.

Interviews are a common research tool in life span and longitudinal studies. Atkinson (1998: p11) argues that the life story narrative obtained in an interview context "may be the most effective means for gaining an understanding of how the self evolves over time – or at least in seeing the subjective perspective on that". The use of interviews has a lineage in this type of research, either as the whole method, or part of it (Terman 1925; Roe 1951, 1951a, 1953; Vaillant 1977; Zuckerman 1977; Bloom 1985; Ryff 1989; Arnold 1994; Moon and Feldhusen 1994; Subotnik and Steiner 1994; Csikszentmihalyi 1996).

Each participant in this project was interviewed separately, almost as if they represented a mini-"case study". Wallace (1989: p26) describes the case study approach as:

- involving one individual being studied;
- where diverse aspects of the individual's life and work are examined together;
- and where emphasis is placed on understanding the development of the work itself.

She writes: "the case study method is aimed at reconstructing the often tortuous path, including the blind alleys and abandoned ways of the creative work" (p33).

The participants in this study were considered ideographically, (i.e. individually), based on biographic and work interviews. Results were then combined for this group to be studied nomothetically (i.e. on the basis of the patterns and trends that exist across the participants).

The researcher recognises that any individual's perspective on life story data will change over time. – it represents their understanding and representations at a point in time, and that understanding will be reworked in the light of changed experiences (Vailliant 1977;

Freeman 1993; Csikszentmihalyi). Cohler (1982 – in Atkinson 1998: p60) echoes this view. This, coupled with questions over the reliability of memory, represents one of the criticisms of this research method. Despite these potential shortcomings, this approach has proved productive in other creativity studies, (e.g. Roe, 1951a, 1953, in her study of scientists; Freeman 1993 in his follow-up of artists described by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi 1976; and Csikszentmihalyi 1996, in his study of 91 individuals acknowledged for their creative achievements.) The recounting of a personal narrative at a point in time is defended by him as representing the "most internally consistent interpretation of the way the past, the experienced present and the anticipated future is understood by that person". Vaillant (1977: p213) argued that longitudinal studies had an unexpectedly positive by-product of retrospection. He suggested that participants in their 40s' and 50s' could acknowledge conflicts and tensions in their earlier life that had not been perceived, or denied earlier in life. On the other hand Kenyon (1995) suggests that the meaning drawn from a life story is never actually complete as the person's life is not yet completed. Even with these potential shortcomings retrospective reflection is recognised as a source of analysis and theory building (Moon and Feldhusen 1994: p394). Care and attention was paid to potential inconsistencies through the research project. (This was done during interviews and subsequent analysis where inconsistencies were noted – or where there were inconsistencies between words used and the emotional tone of the description, e.g. a participant describing school as cruel and harsh, yet saying shortly after that that he was happy at school, and popular.)

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Aims

The researcher's aim was to establish:

- The life background of an individual and the context within which their creative activity developed and now takes place.
- A detailed description of an example of an individual's creative activity that will be indicative of both external and visible activity and work processes involved.
- The individual's plans for future work activity.
- The individual's preferred perceiving and decision-making functions as determined by the Myers Briggs Type Indicator.

3.4.2 Interviews

The researcher used a two-interview structure planned and developed within Kvale's (1996) seven-stage model. All interviews were recorded on audio tape. The introduction to the interviews, and the ethical conduct of them is discussed in section 3.4.6 below. (An overview of the interview structure and content is contained in Chapter 4, tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11.)

Interview 1 (Biography):

- Biographical: the participant's life history, including stories of how their creative activity developed. It aimed to place creativity and creative output in the context of the participant's life structure.

Interview 2 (Creative output):

- A description of an example of the participant's creative activity. (Participants were asked to select a work example of their choice and describe how it came about, what they did to contribute to its development, and the outcome of the work.)

- A standard range of open questions were used across the participant group drawn partly from Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study. These questions add detail both to the biographic and work process information. They are described in Chapter 4, Exploratory Empirical work as their use came from the experience developed from the exploratory interviews.

Generally the two stages were conducted in two separate interviews. However, thirteen participants completed the work within a single meeting[2] (16, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41). The average interview time taken was 1 hour 20 minutes per interview – 2 hours 40 minutes in total across the two interviews. The shortest was 1 hour 25 minutes in total – the longest 3 hours 45 minutes[3]. The time taken by interviews on this project approximates with those of Roe (e.g. 1953). Atkinson (1998: p24) describes this working length as one in which an effective life story can be told, and much can be learnt about a life even though some researchers had used significantly longer times (e.g. Levinson 1978). These timings exceed those of the Csikszentmihalyi 1996 project. Initially, the research plan involved interview 1 and 2 taking place within a short time scale. A number of factors, including the availability of participants and the time consuming nature of tape transcription meant that there were gaps between interviews for some participants.

Interviews were generally conducted in participants' homes. In nine instances the work place was more convenient to participants, and were used instead; (participants 7, 17, 24, 27, 31, 32, 34, 35, 40.)

All interviews began with a summary of their purpose by the researcher – both for ethical reasons and in the interests of creating a relationship in which detailed personal and/or

[2] The reason for this varied. In eight of the cases it was a result of the location of the participant, and time taken for travel to them – their preference and that of the researcher was to complete work in one meeting to minimize further travel.

[3] The initial four interviews took longer as the researcher was gaining experience on the appropriate approach to reach research goals.

confidential matters could be safely discussed. This is described in more detail in section 3.4.6 below, examining ethical considerations.

Once the study purpose was described, the researcher asked introductory questions to settle the participants into the interview discussions. After that point, relatively little guidance was offered and participants structured their own self-report. Further questions within the biographic and work example sections of the interviews were used to clarify ambiguous data, or where it appeared relevant information was being omitted. A number of open questions were gradually added, drawn from Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) interview protocol in order to elicit more biographic data (summarised in chapter 4, tables 4.7 and 4.8).

In an unstructured interview the resulting speech and transcript offers a record of personal phraseology used by the participant – indicating what has an importance and significance for the participant (Roe 1951: p133).

3.4.3 The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The thesis was originally conceived to examine changes to the nature of creativity and creative activity during and after the midlife period (see chapter 1, section 1.2). The Myers Briggs Type Indicator is the most commonly used personality inventory. It has been used as part of creativity research (e.g. MacKinnon 1965). In the context of this thesis it allowed an investigation of the relationships between patterns of creative development, midlife experience and personality type. The change in the focus of the thesis to a whole-life developmental perspective, coupled with results that were primarily indicative of a social systems perspective led the researcher to omit this data from the main results. MBTI data and analysis is contained in Appendix 3 for the purposes of providing additional information and to support the work of other researchers.

3.4.4 Analysis

The methods used for interview data analysis were shaped (a) by the need to stay open to the stories and experiences of participants in describing the developments of their individual creative lives, and (b) by the theoretical literature describing life span development and what is known about the development of creativity over the life span.

All interviews were transcribed from audio tapes. The first twenty participants' interviews were transcribed in full, including pauses, hesitation and 'asides' on unconnected matters. At that point the analytical categories and structure to be used in this thesis had become largely established. (The analytical categories are described in chapter 4, section 4.2.2.) Due to time constraints the remaining interview transcripts did not include comments that were clearly unrelated to the discussion on life development. The information contained in the interview transcripts was supplemented by notes made before and after these interviews. Their purpose and structure is described in section 3.4.7 below on the position of the researcher.

Interviews were analysed using a qualitative data analysis tool called Nudist version 4. The analytical categories are described fully in Chapter 4, Exploratory Empirical Work. Each interview was analysed (a) 'within case' as a means for producing analytical categories from the reported experience of the individual participant – and (b) against the categories produced by other interviews/participants, and the theoretical literature. Interviews 1 – 10 were re-coded on the basis of the analytical structure that had emerged from the experience gained from the first fifteen interviews. The researcher made a practice of coding text 'generously', i.e. marking a large block of text, as other researchers had advised on the importance of seeing and understanding the context from which a particular extract had come. Reports were produced from the software for each analytical category.

Qualitative research interpretation is based on the researcher's own view and there is always the danger this is biased in some way. To check that the researcher's presuppositions had not influenced analysis unduly the researcher asked three individuals (each with experience of interview analysis) to recode an interview independently – an acknowledged and standard practice within qualitative interview research. Interview number 40 was chosen because it demonstrated a wide range of codes used, and had speech oddities that made coding one of the least straight-forward, (e.g. the spoken word did not always translate easily into the written word as this interview contained half-formed, incomplete or changed thoughts.) The codes developed by these individuals corresponded approximately to those identified by the researcher for the participant's general life span development. The researcher identified additional categories based on his focus on creativity and developmental factors associated with it. No new codes for this study were identified by this independent assessment. Scope for further independent checking was limited due to cost restrictions involved in this Ph.D. project.

The reports from each analytical category were examined further and in greater detail in the process of writing-up results chapters and the thesis. The emergence of a more refined structure and detailed understanding within the initial analytical categories was achieved by 'paper and pencil' analysis of software reports. [4]

Participants were considered ideographically, (i.e. individually), based on biographic and work interviews (see description above in section 3.4.2). The analytical outcomes for this research project were based on the patterns and trends accumulated across the participant group.

[4] This process of building research categories from broad self-report data is illustrated in and similar to the work of Lindauer et al 1997.

Some researchers have expressed ethical concerns regarding analysis. For example, Chase (1996: p50) expressed concern that the process of analysis of an individual case within a broader theoretical and conceptual structure removes a participant's story from its own uniqueness – and that the act of doing this may be difficult for the contributor of that narrative. In each case, the researcher discussed this matter with participants and confirmed that their individual data would be examined individually and as part of the patterns found in the whole group. Further, that the containment of individual data within the patterns found in the whole study was one of the principal means of ensuring personal confidentiality. In doing this, however, Chase acknowledges (p51) that the individual's story is being handled within the researcher's agenda, interests, choices and concerns. Through the careful introduction, 'contracting' and conduct of the interviews, the researcher believes that this agenda, interest and concerns were acknowledged with participants to their satisfaction.

3.4.5 Participant Population

The initial intention in this research project was to compare the experiences of individuals in contrasting occupational groups, e.g. artists and organisational managers and, as was described in Chapter 1, the intention was to examine the experiences and development that occurred particularly in the second half of life. This focus changed as the research progressed.

Initial analysis of the early exploratory interviews revealed that the sample contained a number of "influencers" who had received local recognition:

- Individuals who were "influencers", and who undertake activity focused on leading others to a place of change. The category of influencer was proposed by Howard Gardner (e.g. 1993 and 1997) in his frameworks for understanding the type and range of creative activity (see literature review sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3).

- In this sample individuals whose activity had received recognition and had achieved this in localised contexts, rather than the national social acclaim experienced by "exceptional creative individuals".

There has been little research on the life span development of what the researcher has come to term "ordinary or localised creativity", i.e. on people who are recognised locally or regionally, but not nationally or internationally[5]. Due to the opportunity presented by these research participants a decision was taken by the researcher to re-orientate the planned focus of research to:

- the examination of the development of these individuals – "influencers" and "ordinary" creative individuals;
- and to contrast the patterns found in these ordinary creatives with what is known about the development of exceptional creative individuals.

The sample also allowed the contrast of individuals employed within an organisational context, as against those working independently of organisations (i.e. self-employed), yet commonly within the context of groups or organisations.

Further opportunities arose during analysis for contrasts within the participant group. These will be described in Chapter 4, the Exploration and Development of Empirical Work.

The researcher attempted to obtain a sample of individuals who matched the above characteristics. Three sources were used:

- People known professionally to the researcher (n = 8).
- Individuals not previously known to the researcher, who he had learnt of during professional work (n = 8).

[5] A search of 'psycho info', a computer database, with an open date parameter' found no such research in the 179 records presented under these and similar key words.

- Individuals referred to the researcher by professional colleagues (n = 24).

The intention was to focus on individuals with established reputations for creative achievement. In line with the findings of MacKinnon (1992) and Vaillant (1977) it was common to find within these life stories descriptions of failure, struggles and difficulties as well as successes.

Since the researcher intended to examine creative activity in the second half of life, the focus was on individuals not less that 45 years old, and not older than 60 years old. This distinction was made in order to maximize the possibility that individuals experienced the mid-life experiences and changes described in the literature review section 2.7. This would also mean that these events would be relatively recent in a participant's personal history and therefore available for articulation.

Age, gender and occupational distributions will be presented in Chapter 4, Exploration and Development of Empirical Work.

Some data was also gathered concerning the participants' family background. This either emerged from the interview or subsequent clarification of data sought by the researcher. No structured attempt was made to go into family history in any detail due to the open-interview structure – an approach reflected in the work of Roe (e.g. 1951: p5). Nevertheless some features of participants' background deserve comment.

Five participants – 4 female, 1 male – were born overseas. (Participant numbers: 1, 2, 10, 18 and 22 – an Australian, American, Pole, South African, and a New Zealander.) They had spent a minimum of 20 years (1 case) and in excess of 30 years (for the remainder) in the UK culture. This length of time in the UK working environment was used as a guiding point for inclusion. A decision to include these participants was made on the basis of (a) a similar decision made by Roe (1953: p45) and (b) a careful evaluation of their individual interview data to be alert to potentially different developmental and experiential patterns.

A further potential cultural influence exists within this group, and is considered by the researcher to be a reflection of changing work and travel patterns that have arisen globally since the 1960s. Twenty of the participants have undertaken periods of work of varying duration overseas from the U.K. (Participant numbers 1, 2, 6, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 41.) The shortest was a period of weeks – the longest involved contracts or domestic circumstances extending to two or more years. The travels of thirteen of this group (2, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 41) involved activity having a direct bearing on their creative work, i.e. involved activity for which they were recommended and involved in this project. In each case, however, the UK was the primary base of their work operation and over time involved the focus of their working activity.

One participant (5) withdrew from involvement in the project after the first biographic interview. This is explained further in the following section on ethical implications of this research. Three potential participants declined to become involved on the basis of work pressure. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) describes this as a common form of response from those involved in creative activity – they achieve their work as a result of a high level of focus, and an unwillingness to be distracted.

Both the researcher and the research sample are white, UK-based, and largely middle class in origin. This will place the research results in this cultural, social and ethnic context and in the influences of the time period (i.e. the late 1990s) in which it was conducted. Future research on these or related questions may therefore produce different results given changes and developments in the research context. Levinson (1996) while acknowledging the same limitations nevertheless argued strongly for the value of adult lifespan development research. He suggested that the volume and nature of theoretical and empirical knowledge achieved in this subject area is still so low that even contextually and culturally bound information has value and would provide a basis for developing understanding in this area.

3.4.6 Ethics

There are several ethical elements to consider in a study of this nature. First, the study has been conducted in accordance with the principles advocated by the British Psychological Society Code of Conduct for Research on Human Participants, as illustrated below:

The researcher has been alert to the possibility that this study, (as in any study involving detailed reflection on past and present activities), has the potential to create unsettling experiences for participants. Banister et al (1994: p3) go further in suggesting that the act of interviewing will change the person and the community. Evidence of this potential impact occurred with the fifth participant of this study. This person withdrew following the biographic interview. While initially an enthusiastic volunteer, this person had found that a detailed life review had involved memories of unresolved and painful experiences that were clearly distressing. The researcher accepted the withdrawal immediately and offered this participant time and support outside the context of this study to examine these issues, and to refer her for independent professional therapeutic support if wanted. This was acknowledged, but not accepted.

The researcher's concern for participants was reflected in giving the time and attention to achieving a 'research contract' - the understanding and agreement with each participant on which they would join the research. This included:

- a written invitation to join the research, including a briefing on the interview/questionnaire structure;
- planned time boundaries for the discussions, and the expected number of visits involved;
- undertakings of confidentiality;
- the use of tape recordings;

- a commitment to share / send to them tape transcriptions;
- and the option for withdrawal from the research at any time up to the time of 'writing up' of the thesis.

The 'contract' was restated and reviewed at the start of each meeting. These principles reflect the requirements of the British Psychological Society code of ethics on research involving human participants.

Additionally, the researcher monitored the unfolding of each interview for signs of its impact on participants. For example, nineteen out of forty participants talked with a clearly different voice tone and body language between biographic and work interviews. The former tended to evoke higher-pitched, nervous, or tremulous speech, with body language that involved minimal eye contact and a body angled away from 'facing' the researcher. The latter tended to involve a firmer, louder, authoritative tone, and much higher levels of eye contact. This suggested and communicated to the researcher a sensitivity and even vulnerability in discussing issues of life background and story, and a shift to greater comfort and/or confidence in discussing work matters. (To help manage these reactions, particularly the former, the researcher maintained the open interview format leaving the interview content to the interviewee. He maintained positive and respectful body language and other non-verbal responses to assure the interviewee of attentiveness.)

There are additional aspects of research ethics referred to in other literature, particularly more recent developments in the narrative study of lives.

Roe (1953: p53) explained that she was unexpectedly asked by one of her participants what would happen to the study data after completion. She had not anticipated that question and made clear that it required careful consideration, even to the point of what would happen to the interview and test data after her death. The researcher explained to participants in this study that:

- All data would be held confidentially.
- Their identity would be concealed from any final study results and from quotations used within the text.
- Interview transcripts might be examined by other academics – but an over-riding priority would the maintenance of participants' own privacy and security of identity.
- Interviews were considered to be based on "shared ownership" – the records, transcripts and tapes belonged to the researcher – the copyright of the words remained with the participant.

In practical terms:

- All interview tapes have been retained.
- All interview transcripts have been retained in text and electronic form.
- All interview analysis has been retained in text reports and electronic form from Nudist v4, i.e. reports by analytical category or theme, in addition to summaries of coding used in individual interview transcripts.
- A significant number of interviews include personal and commercially confidential material. For that reason names were not included in transcripts where practical. (The flow and detail of speech did not always make this possible.)
- The above data is only available from the researcher (rather than included in archive or electronic form) to ensure that any appropriate steps for privacy may be considered in the use of this material by any other academic. The handling of this data in the event of the researcher's unexpected incapacity or death is dealt with in his Will.

The avoidance of 'harm' to participants:

The ethics associated with research based on narrative interviews has been further explored and challenged in Josselson (1996), with particular attention being paid to the manner in which research may affect participants. Bakan (1996: p5) stresses that "the most significant truths about human beings inhere in the story of their lives. Yet they need protection for making their stories available to others." He raises concern for potential violation of privacy, and mental, legal, social and financial hurt and harm (p3). Additionally, Chase (1996: p45) argues that "... narrative research demands that we pay special attention to participants' vulnerability and analysts' interpretive authority". She takes this position because an extensive use of individuals' stories must render these participants more open and vulnerable to personal exposure - in the telling of the story, and public exposure in its publication – than might be the case in other qualitative studies.

In this sample most participants' data is given privacy by inclusion within broader patterns found within the overall group. For those individuals quoted to illustrate both their voice and the events they describe as representative of the group:

- care has been taken to exclude any personally identifying statements;
- where the identification of an industry or particular form of work might be revealing, this has been stated generally, rather than naming a specific organisation type.

In addition, a gap of approximately three years between commencing the first thirty interviews and the presentation of the thesis also has the potential to mitigate this vulnerability due to the time elapsing between the interview and thesis presentation (Chase 1996: p47).

Bar-On (1996: p9) argues that research, particularly biographical interviewing, is a direct intervention in an individual's life, one which has unclear boundaries in contrast with therapeutic or clinical work. The experience of the researcher reflects that of Roe (1953: p3) -

these participants were giving willingly of their time, without any expected gain from their work. It was not a function of this study to upset or unsettle them during biographical reflection on their life and work. Yet, as Roe reports, any good personal study may run this risk. The researcher, from training and working experience in psychotherapy, is familiar with hearing the detail and texture of individual life stories. This research was, however, not clinical or therapeutic in its intent, and for this reason the researcher was particularly alert and concerned towards responses from participants which indicated a clinical need was present when communicating a narrative.

Many participants communicated levels of detail of their lives that indicated significant effort had been placed on their part to understanding its pattern, contributing factors and meaning. Yet strong and often unresolved grief and emotion was expressed in many places over matters like a relationship with a parent, the death of a parent, the loss of work and status through redundancy and poor personal decision-making and reflection on a life which in many respects was considered unfulfilled. In any case where this occurred the researcher offered the opportunity either to defer or stop the work. He also made a professional (although private) psychotherapeutic assessment on whether or not the participant required other support beyond the boundaries of the research study[6]. As stated earlier, one participant withdrew from the study after the first interview. In no other case did a participant ask to postpone or stop the research work, despite these experiences.

The commonest reaction to being a participant was that the discussion gave them the opportunity to reconsider the meaning of parts of their lives and work, and as such was something from which they themselves learnt in some way. This reaction was also found in Roe's work (1953: p38).

[6] The researcher is an accredited psychotherapist by the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy.

Is the level of concern for ethics in this research over-detailed or out of place in this context? The researcher believes not and, in line with the arguments of Josselson (1996a: p70), considers them an on-going sign of an alertness on the part of a researcher to the potential of harming research participants, and the steps which may be needed to avoid this occurring.

3.4.7 Verification of data

Qualitative research seeks "value" or "credibility". 'Reality' is seen as comprised of many sets of mental constructions. Therefore the qualitative researcher seeks to conduct the study in a way that findings will be found credible, to ensure he or she has represented those 'realities' adequately, and that they are "credible to the constructors of the multiple realities" (Lincoln and Guba 1985: p 295/6).

Six different factors have been used (drawn from the verification framework recommended by Lincoln and Guba 1985 and Kvale 1996):

1 "Prolonged engagement": the researcher has invested periods of time that allowed him to be alert to and test for misinformation, discrepancies or misunderstandings existing within the interview data, and to build trust between the researcher and interviewees (Lincoln and Gruba 1985: p301/2 and Kvale 1996: p243). Cohler (1982: p207) and Atkinson (1998: p60) advocate examining internal consistency within the biography/narrative as a means of testing for misinformation, discrepancies or inaccuracies[7]. The stories should be consistent within themselves, and the narrative should have a sense of its own. Bar-On (1996: p12) writes illustratively of how he could seek internal consistency and accuracy within his participants' stories, and

[7] The researcher recognises that in other qualitative traditions, e.g. discourse analysis, people are expected to be inconsistent, as they try to achieve different things or different points in their narrative.

explore this when found to be inadequate. The researcher used an analytical category in Nudist analysis to record examples of discontinuity (contradictions occurring) within an interview text.

2 "Persistent observation": also reflecting an investment of time sufficient to identify characteristics and elements that are most relevant to the questions being studied (ibid. p304). In a research context where some of the relevant issues are not known, sufficient time must be invested until a range of relevant characteristics emerge. The point at which they cease to recur in new interviews, or few additional elements appear is indicative of the amount of effort needed to investigate a given context. As will be described in Chapter 4, the main structure of the analytical categories that emerged from the interviews was achieved by 20+ interviews.

3 Triangulation: this practice relates to using multiple sources of information and methods in order to raise the possibility that the relevant research outcomes are being reached. While the researcher has focused on interviewing as the main data-gathering tool, this has been supplemented by a review of a range of work outcomes from participants where possible and available. (E.g. viewing the musicals of the composer, visiting an exhibition of the sculptor's work and reading books produced by the writers involved. This supplementary examination was possible for 32 out of 40 participants.) Part of this cross-check involved using the second interview to examine an example of the participant's work to determine whether novelty, utility and recognition did in fact apply to this work. The primary source of participants has been referral from other parties – cross-checked against the selection criteria for this study (the evolution of which is described in Chapter 4). Three independent analysts have checked the coding of one representative interview. The nature of the research focus has resulted in the use of multiple theories to evaluate the research data.

3 Peer debriefing: involves communicating one's work to disinterested or independent peers. Atkinson (1998: p61) describes this as persuasion - where the story appears "reasonable and convincing to others – possible and plausible that this event or experience could happen to someone else". It opens the researcher to searching questions, particularly in the areas of potential biases, meanings and interpretations. Additionally, it provides the opportunity to gain feedback on working hypotheses and potential next steps in research work (Lincoln and Guba 1985: p308; Kvale 1996: p246/7). The researcher presented theoretical aspects of this work at two conferences during 1998 and 1999, preliminary research results in two conferences during 1999 and a further two conferences/educational meetings in 2000. The work in 1999 and 2000 involved extended sessions of 90 - 120 minutes duration. The primary feedback from these sessions involved advice on further ways of analyzing the research findings, and support for a hypothesis on how individuals choose work in their early twenties. (These will be further described in Chapters 4 and 6.)

4 Negative case analysis: Lincoln and Guba (1985: p309) describe this as the process of revising hypotheses on the basis of experience in empirical work. Chapter 4, on the exploration and development of empirical work, will describe the process through which this research moved from one focusing initially on the characteristics of creativity in later life, to a 'whole life'study of the development of "influencers" whose contributions occur within a localised "field". The thesis also examines "negative cases" – cases where outcomes were not as expected.

6 Member checks: of data, categories and interpretations (Lincoln and Guba 1985: p314; Kvale 1996: p246/7). This is described as occurring informally and formally within the research. "Informal" checks occur continuously during the interview when the interviewer summarizes understanding or clarifies using further questions. This

practice has been adopted within these research interviews. "Formal" checks are focused on sessions conducted subsequent to the research interviews. The researcher has met 24 participants in follow-up interviews to review the understandings gained from their specific interviews, and the categories used to analyze the material. Two participants attended a conference described above, and a presentation of preliminary overall research findings. Generally, reactions have been supportive of the analysis conducted. On other occasions, the redefinition of the possible meanings e.g. of "parental support" for activities in childhood, have helped advance the researcher's understanding of individual experience.

Atkinson (1998: p61) uses the term corroboration for when an interview is transcribed and given to the participant to confirm or support what was originally said. Interview transcripts have been given to each participant with an invitation to amend the information recorded. Nineteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 35, 37, 39.) overtly accepted this opportunity in varying levels of detail. Their changes, however, did not alter the original understanding gained from the interviews. In addition, the researcher sought to confirm chronological details during interviews, and check interpretations of individual accounts within the research interviews or feedback interviews (which averaged one hour in duration). A distinction needs to be made here, however, between confirmation of what was said and the researcher's understanding of the text via various analytical frameworks. Bar-On (1996: p 16) and others (e.g. Chase 1996) debate the extent to which it is appropriate for a researcher to confirm his or her analytical understanding of an interview text and theoretical constructs produced from its analysis with participants. Confirming findings with participants represents a research style and methodology within feminist research approaches aimed at equalizing 'power' between the researcher and the 'researched' participant. In line with Chase and Bar-On, the researcher decided not to communicate and negotiate that level and

detail of understanding with participants. (The two participants who attended conference presentations did see the researcher's detailed analysis. The researcher met and talked with both subsequently to check whether they saw his analysis in any other way. They reported that they agreed with the researcher.)

As is common with qualitative work verification or validation has been built into the research process, rather than treating it as something to be examined at an end point (Kvale 1996: p242).

"External validity" refers to the extent to which the results of a study may be generalized to other contexts and/or populations. Qualitative researchers have redefined the extent to which findings may be "applicable" or "transferable" to other settings. In the case of this qualitative research the researcher can only claim to know about the research or 'sending' context. The role, therefore, of the qualitative researcher is to provide a sufficiently detailed description of empirical evidence to allow another investigator to determine the scope for similarity of context or judgements (Lincoln and Guba 1985: p297/8).

"Reliability" is defined, in quantitative research, as where two or more repetitions of a similar inquiry process, under similar conditions, will result in similar findings. Atkinson (1998: p58) defines reliability as a position where the same answers will be reached wherever and whenever questioning is carried out. But, he acknowledges, life story interviews will often yield individual or unique categories of analysis with a complexity of meaning that would extend beyond that which could have been anticipated at the outset of the research. No two researchers will carry out and record an interview in a completely replicable manner. For this reason the interview needs to be acknowledged as a personal encounter which will reflect the quality of the exchange between interviewer and participant. Further, the personal narrative is not meant to be seen as an exact record of all that has happened. The use of a biography implies a certain perspective or point of view – life stories are told through

interpretive eyes. They give clues as to what a participant values, and how they construct personal meaning. The qualitative research equivalents to reliability are focused on consistency and dependability. In the context of this research the interviewer has introduced and conducted interviews consistently across all participants. Where experience has brought about shifts in question structure this has been carefully noted, and this new perspective has been followed-up with earlier participants who might not have been asked a question in a particular manner. The conduct of the researcher as an interviewer is reviewed below in a section examining the place of the researcher. This will also include a description of a process used (advocated by Reason 1981) to keep as many as possible of personal reactions out of the interview context, and to focus on the meanings being offered and constructed by participants.

Roe (1951: p2) also acknowledged the potential subjectivity of the research data she obtained, and questions that could therefore be raised about reliability and validity. She described using criteria similar to those of Atkinson (1998) described above - internal consistency, honesty, and plausibility of these accounts to others.

Lang (1996: p157) acknowledges that there are limits that must be dealt with in adopting a phenomenological perspective in research. He recommends treating results reflexively. Reflexivity means questioning interpretations, and leaving scope for reinterpretations – and accepting that insights gained are impermanent.

3.4.8 The Position of the Researcher

This chapter describes a research process where the research data is seen as "socially constructed" as a result of the interaction occurring between the researcher, and participants. The results arise from an interaction between the participants and the researcher interviewer.

Banister et al (1994: p13) make explicit the need to acknowledge and manage this factor. They write: "research is always carried out from a particular standpoint, and the pretence to neutrality in many quantitative studies in psychology is disingenuous. It is always worth considering, then, the 'position of the researcher', both with reference to the definition of the problem to be studied and with regard to the way the researcher interacts with the material to produce a particular type of sense."

Against this background, it is appropriate to examine two things. First, to make explicit perspectives held by the researcher that may have potentially influenced the research outcomes. Second, the possibility of 'projection' on the part of the researcher, and its potential influence on this research.

Perspectives held by the Researcher

The explicit perspectives held by the researcher in approaching this research are as follows:

- The researcher adopted a curious, open, and respectful attitude to the 'stories' described by participants, and sought to communicate this to them, both in words, and in non-verbal body language. (The purpose of this is was to communicate respect for them as individuals, and their stories, and to help create an atmosphere in which these might be more fully shared.)
- The researcher assumed, in line with views expressed by Treffinger and Puccio (1997), that every person is potentially creative, and that the current perspective of wider creativity research at this time is an examination of "how?" (This research has, therefore, orientated to the type and use of creativity, rather than seeking to judge, prove, or disprove its existence.)
- The researcher believes and considers that there are influences on the nature of creative

activity in later life as yet unexamined in existing research. (This position was reflected and argued in the literature review - that there has been a bias towards a product-focused study of *creativity and ageing*, and that it is relevant to explore contributing influences within the person and process in a social context.)

- There is the possibility that some of these influences or outcomes on creativity in later life may be positive in their nature. (As discussed in the literature review - there is evidence that for these post-40-years-old there is not 'simply' a remorseless decline in the nature and use of individual creativity - that there may be other more positive interpretations, experiences and developments of creativity in this period, e.g. Simonton 1990b, 1991, 2000; Cohen-Shalev 1986, 1989; Lindauer 1993, 1993a; Lindauer at al 1997).

Several indicators suggest that these perspectives have not structured or influenced the research in the 'expected' manner.

- Previous professional working relationships with some (8) participants did not make interviewing 'easy' or readily accepted. Nervousness from participants was overt, and in one case, described above, withdrawal occurred. Participation and contribution to the research had to be negotiated in all cases as a new working relationship, within defined and agreed boundaries.
- Where the researcher knew or knew of a participant before the research prior knowledge facilitated the interview process. It helped the process of making contact, and anticipating the direction of the interview content. All interviews where the researcher had prior knowledge of the participant still involved the disclosure and establishment of large

amounts of information previously unknown to the researcher - indicating an openness to work towards previously unknown material. As a result of this new information gained the researcher had to remain alert to unexpected developments, such as one participant who described many 'negative' experiences and consequences he associated with creative work. (Roe 1953 also knew, or knew of, some of her research participants.)

- Interviews established negative cases - cases where experiences of creativity and ageing were not positive, or where a recommendation to the researcher (from a peer) for participation had proved potentially inaccurate or inappropriate (on the basis of criteria described in 3.4.5 above).

"Projection" on the part of the researcher?

A further aspect to consider in a qualitative study of this sort is whether the population chosen and the results achieved are affected by 'projection' on the part of the researcher, i.e. was the researcher looking for, seeing and reporting some aspect of his 'hobby-horses' in this study?

This research group does represent occupations and activities that bear a close relationship with those performed by the researcher, either personally, or in interests that he holds. His work is also as an 'influencer' and, like many of the population he is also an 'intuitive-feeling' type as assessed by the MBTI.

He has been interested by the development of individuals in this population group, and also because it represents a growing occupational group within today's changing and more flexible employment patterns. Any researcher faces the practical question of the availability of participants that will relate and contribute to his or her research questions. This researcher chose occupations with which he was familiar.

While the occupations of this group are similar to those of the researcher, in other ways they are different. These participants work in related areas, but not identical ones to the

researcher. They draw on skills that are similar to those of the researcher but which he also believes he possesses in a very different (and lower) measure to the research sample. Further, as will be shown in chapter 4, other MBTI types were involved.

Has the researcher's work been misdirected or led astray by his familiarity with the primary occupational group? He believes not – because of the use of a reflective process advocated by Reason (1981). In the conduct of these interviews he followed the work of Reason (1981: p246) and Bar-On (1996: p11) in that a structured process was used to observe, manage and learn from the personal emotional responses of the researcher prior to, during and after the interviews. The intent of this process was to ensure wherever possible that the researcher's emotions were kept clear of distracting the interview process and the participants during this research. It involved the use of field notes made prior to and directly after interviews to observe any personal reactions or emotions on the part of the researcher that required "management" in this context. It proved a practice that acquired a cumulative effect, in that these responses became clearer and more immediately manageable as interviews progressed. This method of organised self-reflection focused on the experience of the researcher and the interviewee, where they overlap, and where they needed to be kept apart, and how this can be used to manage "transference" or "projection". (A similar process is used in psychotherapeutic work for this express purpose.) In addition a number of research findings were not expected by the researcher. (He originally took a view held in the past by Csikszentmihalyi – that creativity was an intrapsychic phenomenon. The work on this thesis has moved the researcher to the view that it is a phenomenon that exists within a social and developmental system.) The findings represented by this thesis are primarily social, environmental and relation-oriented in origin and were factors the researcher under-rated prior to this project.

The Life Story Interview

A further potential influence on research outcomes is the role of the interviewer in the life story interview. Examining these, Atkinson (1998: p40) describes the role of the life story interviewer as: "helping the person create and convey his or her meaning in life through the story of what has happened" and that this is an informal approach "eliciting open-ended responses and in-depth comments". In this work both the interviewer and the person recounting the life story are involved in finding and constructing meaning, an active process which is unavoidably collaborative.

Wallace (1989: p31) suggests that the interviewer has a phenomenological and critical role. The phenomenological role involves seeking to 'enter the mind' of the participant to reconstruct the meaning of their experience from his or her point of view. The critical role then follows, which involves the interviewer 'standing to one-side' of the participant to evaluate the data received, and to explain and interpret them. The researcher used these two foci of activity in interviews and analysis throughout the thesis.

The researcher has explained that he had known 8 participants professionally prior to this study. Along with Wallace (1989: p31) he found that this position was advantageous as it provided an established degree of understanding that is not accessible to other researchers without this familiarity. Roe (1953: p51) also explained that she had prior knowledge of a number of her participants. She did not see this as a factor to exclude them from the study – only to ensure that all those involved met the criteria for inclusion.

Roe (1953: p53) reported that readers of her work had observed that she was "emotionally involved" with some of those who participated in her work. She went on to say: "this is what a psychologist says when he means that you like someone enough to feel strongly with him. He was right." The researcher was alert to the potential for this involvement from the earliest stages of this project. His aim was to be personal enough, and respectful enough

with participants to prompt them into sharing their stories – so they felt secure enough to risk the sharing of their stories in a confidential environment. Two interviews in particular led to a warmth or rapport being developed between the participants and the researcher – recognised by Subotnik and Arnold (1994) as a component of a study of this nature. Being a "human instrument" of research, there were occasions on which the researcher expressed either surprise or was moved by what participants reported. As a general practice, however, his intent was to act as another person hearing the story in a respectful manner, and acting in a role where he prompted for further information and clarity.

In some instances the strength and intensity of participants' stories and emotions in interview lead the researcher to seek personal discussions with others (e.g. peer-group Ph.D. research students) to explore and understand his reaction to them. The feedback-interview phase of work proved emotionally and physically demanding given the intensity of returning to participants (commonly with two interviews per day for a period) to confirm earlier material and explore developments subsequent to the original interview.

Chapter 4, the Exploration and Development of Empirical Work turns to describe the early stages of research used both to gain experience, evaluate the interview as a data-gathering tool, and to adjust the interview structure on the basis of this experience.

Chapter 4 Exploration and Development of Empirical Work

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will be used to describe the exploration and development of empirical work and present an overview of its results. It will present:

- The research activity that took place.
- The five phases through which the interview research for this thesis was conducted.
- The developments which occurred in:
  1. The framework for the interview.
  2. The underlying concept of the research.
  3. Changes to the research questions.
  4. The development of "codes" or categories that emerged from interview analysis.

These details will provide the background to the presentation of research findings and discussion that will take place in Chapters 5 – 9.

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the exploration and development of empirical work. This has been provided to summarise the unfolding nature of the research over time and to help the reader navigate and understand these details.

Additionally, due to the volume and complexity of data an overview of research findings will be presented at the end of this chapter to help guide the reader through the detail that will follow in the results chapters.

Table 4.1: Overview of exploration and development of empirical work:

Interviews	Research Activity ⇒	Conclusions and revisions to research plans
1 – 4	• Each participant was previously known to the researcher. • Each participant had a reputation for creativity in their context. • An example of their creative output was seen and examined. • Initial focus of the interviews was activity in the midlife and after (while also eliciting reports of	• Interviews produced detailed life descriptions and a work example. • Interview aims were practical and achievable in the allocated time. Productive data were secured. • Midlife experiences emerged that were predicted in literature. • Limited evidence emerged of the MBTI 'inferior function'.

Interviews	Research Activity ⇒	Conclusions and revisions to research plans
	earlier life.) • These interviews allowed an exploration of the extent to which qualitative research interviews would provide research data for this subject area. • Preliminary identification of themes and categories emerged from the interviews. • The logistics of interview arrangements were tested. • Possible changes to research questions were examined.	• The researcher proceeded with the next 6 interviews on the basis of this experience.
5 – 10	• Four out of six participants were not previously known to the researcher. • Participant 5 withdrew from the study for personal reasons. (The interview brought up unresolved problems in her life that she found distressing.) • Biographic questions were incorporated from the interview protocol of Csikszentmihalyi (1996). • 'Negative cases' emerged. • Expanded definitions of 'creativity' emerged (see chapter 5/section 5.2.) • Further interview themes/codes emerged. • Nudist analytical software was used from this point.	• A clear pattern was apparent of participants being individuals involved in 'localized' creativity, and 'influencers'. • Midlife experience predicted in literature continued to emerge. • Minimal evidence was emerging of midlife and post-midlife changes predicted by the MBTI. • Preliminary evidence emerged of 'peak' organisational achievement during the midlife period for some participants. (This relates to peak achievement predicted in literature on the exceptional creative individual.) • Interview arrangements were proving practical and effective. • The researcher decided to focus on 'influencers' and 'local' creatives from this point.
11 - 15	• Participant selection criteria was based on the 'influencer' role and a local creative reputation from this point. • Participant sources included individuals recommended by others on the basis of selection criteria from this point. • Further questions were added from the interview protocol of Csikszentmihalyi (1996). • Analytical categories/themes appeared to stabilise – fewer new categories were emerging from interview analysis. • Analytical categories in the childhood and adolescence time period resembled those found in work on the exceptional creative individual. • Two 'story' groups were clearly emerging – those that established a relationship with creative activity early, and those that took longer to	• The researcher decided to continue the focus on 'influencers' and local or ordinary creativity. • The researcher decided to seek a developmental comparison between those working in organisations, and those working/based outside them. • The researcher also concluded that a 'whole life' focus was needed from this point, rather than one on midlife and middle age – given that creativity and midlife experiences appeared to be heavily influenced by earlier life experiences.

Interviews	Research Activity ⇒	Conclusions and revisions to research plans
	do this, i.e. in to adulthood.	
16 – 30	• Research focus was now on whole life experience and developmental patterns. • Considerable effort was needed to examine additional literature to support a whole life focus. • Interview data appeared to confirm the two 'story' groups described above – early starters and later starters and some of the associated development patterns.	• As part of the broadening of research focus, early adulthood data was being examined to determine life structure priorities and the contribution of the componential theory of creativity to life span development. • No evidence was being established for the predicted 'late life style' of creativity in middle age. • Jaques (1965) predictions for changes to creative activity in midlife were being used from this point. • The researcher decided to attempt a more equal balance of participants between the two story groups in remaining research interviews.
31 – 41	• The researcher was directing research efforts towards an exploration of the early starter and later starter development patterns. • The primary focus on participant selection in this phase was to locate further 'early starter' participants in order to more closely balance the numbers of early starters and later starters. • The researcher was also seeking to locate further women to interview to increase the gender balance in selection.	• The researcher was reviewing and further probing the characteristics of group 1 and group 2 on the basis of data gained from additional participants in group 1. • The researcher was also reviewing data to examine the contribution of organisations to individual development, and for indicators of the middle age 'late life style'.

4.2 *The Interviews*

Research interviews were conducted in five phases:

- The first four interviews.
- A further six interviews to give a sample of ten interviews (one of who withdrew from participation in the research study).
- A further five interviews to give a sample of fifteen interviews.
- A further fifteen interviews to give a sample of thirty interviews.
- A final eleven interviews to give a total of forty-one participants (leaving forty in total allowing for the participant who withdrew).

The results of the interviews were analysed and written up at each of the above phases, with the implications of these results for the nature and direction of future interviews reconsidered at each point.

Tables 4.2 – 4.5 provide demographic data on sample background. Table 4.5 identifies the source of participant contacts.

Table 4.2: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
1		x	59	Composer
2		x	55	Writer/mngt consultant
3	x		46	Counsellor
4	x		55	Writer/mngt consultant
5		x	52	**Withdrew**[1]
6	x		47	Trainer/mngt consultant
7		x	46	Snr manager
8	x		52	Trainer/mngt consultant
9	x		54	Writer
10		x	59	Yoga teacher/writer
11	x		47	Trainer/mngt consultant
12	x		47	Youth worker
13	x		55	Teacher (Outdoor p/sts.)
14	x		52	Trainer/mngt consultant
15	x		53	Trainer/writer
16		x	59	Trainer/mngt consultant

[1] This participant found a detailed life review reminded her of unresolved matters in her life that were clearly distressing to her. She therefore withdrew.

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
17		x	59	Trainer / Counsellor
18		x	55	Artist/sculptor
19	x		49	Trainer/mngt consultant
20		x	48	Trainer/mngt consultant
21	x		49	Trainer/counsellor
22	x		59	Trainer/mngt consultant
23	x		55	Managing Director
24	x		51	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
25		x	50	Psychotherapist
26	x		58	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
27		x	45	Company Director
28		x	53	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
29	x		50	C. of E. Vicar
30	x		53	Psychotherapist
31	x		49	Company Director
32	x		53	Advertising Executive
33	x		54	NGO Chief Exec.
34	x		51	Senior Manager
35	x		50	Senior Manager
36		x	58	Singer/voice teacher
37	x		52	Osteopath / trainer
38		x	53	Trainer/mngt consultant
39		x	53	Writer
40		x	50	Manager
41		x	58	Trainer/mngt consultant

Note: Participant number 5, who withdrew, is excluded from the data from this point, leaving a total of 40 participants.

Table 4.3: Gender

Area:	Number:	%
Male	24	60
Female	16	40

Table 4.4: Age distribution:

Age Range:	45 – 50	51 – 55	56 - 60
Males	9	13	2
Females	5	5	6
Total	14	18	8
%	35	45	20
Participant Numbers:	3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, 29, 31, 35, 40.	2, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 23, 24, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39.	1, 10, 16, 17, 22, 26, 36, 41.

It can be seen that 60% of the sample were male, and 40 % female. Around a third were aged 45 – 50 years old, just under half were 51 – 55 years old, and a fifth were 56 – 60 years old.

Table 4.5: Sample, by broad occupational category, and numbers by specific occupations:

Working for an organisation (salaried employees):	Self-employed (hired by organisations):	Other (Self-employed, generally working 1:1):
N = 13; % = 32.5	N = 17; % = 42.50	N = 10; % = 25
Manager = 1 (40) Senior manager = 4 (7, 32, 34, 35.) Youth worker/scout ldr = 1 (12) Trainer / counsellor = 1 (17) Managing Director = 1 (23) Company Director = 2 (27, 31) Vicar # = 1 (29) NGO Chief Exec. = 1 (33) Osteopath / trainer = 1 (27) (# Engaged primarily in organisational work.)	Management Consultant and writer = 2 (2, 4) Management Consultant and trainer = 10 (6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 38, 41) Outdoor Pursuits teacher = 1 (13) Trainer, writer, architect = 1 (15) Trainer / counsellor = 1 (21) Trainer / outplacement consultant = 2 (24, 26)	Composer = 1 (1) Artist & sculptor = 1 (18) Counsellor = 1 (3) Psychotherapist = 2 (25, 30) Writer = 2 (9, 39) Yoga teacher / writer = 1 (10) Outplacement / career consultant = 1 (28) Singer / voice teacher = 1 (36)
Note: Participant numbers are provided in brackets beside each occupational category.)		
Participant nos: 7, 12, 17, 23, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40.	Participant nos: 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 38, 41.	Participant nos: 1, 3, 9, 10, 18, 25, 28, 30, 36, 39

Occupational information describes work at the time of the research interviews. The majority of the sample were trainers or management consultants. It was common to find individuals working on more than one occupational role. Other occupations include teachers, a composer, artist and sculptor, managers, chief executives. About a third worked directly for organisations in a conventional employment capacity. Just under a half were self-employed and were hired by organisations in a consulting or training role. A quarter were self employed and generally worked in some other capacity – most commonly 1:1 relationships with other individuals. The descriptions of the work of all

these individuals places them in the category of "influencer" described in the literature review and research method chapter. This relationship will be obvious for roles such as trainers or consultants. In other cases the influencer role was less obvious. The composer, for example, described one of her primary motivations as providing a team and confidence-building experience to young people as they staged musical performances.

Table 4.6: Source of Contact:

Source of Contact:	Number of participants:	Total:
Known professionally by the researcher:	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 17, 23.	8
Not previously known, approached directly by the researcher:	6, 8, 9, 13, 19, 21, 27, 31.	8
Recommended by others to the researcher.	10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41.	24

The contact of all participants, from whichever source of contact, was made on the basis of the selection criteria described in this chapter.

4.2.1 The First Four Interviews

As described in Chapter 1 (section 1.2) the initial focus of this research was on changes to creative activity occurring during and after the mid-life period. This was, therefore, the research focus in the opening interviews.

Participants were selected on the basis of:

1. Involvement in an activity stereotypically recognised as creative (e.g. composer).
2. Or: involvement in an activity in which they used creative skills, e.g. writer.

And

3. A reputation for creative activity within a "field".

Each of the first four participants was previously known professionally to the researcher at some point over the last twenty years. In each case he knew of their reputation and their work and had, for example, seen the musicals composed and produced by the composer (participant 1), and read books written by participants 2 and 4.

Table 4.7: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
1		x	59	Composer
2		x	55	Writer/mngt consultant
3	x		46	Counsellor
4	x		55	Writer/mngt consultant

In an attempt not to 'lead' or shape the responses of participants they were not initially told that the principal focus of the research was creativity in later life (at that time). It was simply explained that the research was to examine the development and change of creativity over time in an individual life. For that reason, and in order to obtain background and contextual information, interviews included a request for biographic information from early life.

The aim of these interviews as perceived at that time was to:

- explore the extent to which qualitative research interviews could provide data on research questions;
- determine the type of information which may most usefully be established in this context;
- identify the categories or themes relating to research questions which might emerge from the unstructured interviews;
- explore and define the logistical arrangements needed to conduct a study via these routes;

- examine whether and to what extent the research questions may require revision on the basis of empirical work.

The interviews produced detailed information on the participants' lives, work background and processes of working. Research data used in this and subsequent interview phases was drawn from participant life histories/biographies and standard interview questions. The information gathered on a work example proved to be useful in cross-checking the recommendation that the participant was producing new, novel and useful work within a localized context. However, the level of detail contributed was too great to incorporate into a thesis focused on a life span perspective and the work example data was not used further.

While three of the participants (1, 2, and 4) talked beyond the proposed time scale (of 2.5 – 3 hours) for the interviews, the interview with participant three suggested that detailed and articulate information could be achieved within the originally planned times for these interviews. The explanations of the research and the assurances of confidentiality appeared to be precise enough to encourage participants to contribute to this work.

The interview structure at this stage was simply:

1. a request for a life story in overview to obtain biographic information; and
2. the description of the history and experience of an example of their work, chosen by the participant.

Biographic information unfolded largely chronologically. The structure of the interviews is summarised in the table below.

Table 4.8: Interview structure at the start of the research project:

Interview	**Topic Areas**	**Sample Questions**
Biographic/ Life History	Birth Childhood memories Childhood activities Schooling Entry into work Types of work Crossroads / milestones Motivations	"Where were you born?" "What activities do you remember from childhood?" "What do you recall of your experiences of school?" Prompts: "Tell me more about that?" "Why was that?"
Work Background	Type of work. Motivation.	How did you come to choose that path of work? "Why do you compose music - what does it give you?"
Example of creative work	Participant decides which example to examine. Action-by-action discussion of content.	"How do you know when you have music to be composed?" "What is that experience like?" "What happens then?"

Research questions at this stage were focused on:

(1) the presumed existence of a potentially life-changing midlife period;

(2) whether an individual would change activity as a result of the midlife experiences;

(3) whether interviews would reveal any useful relationship to the MBTI data, including the MBTI/Jungian 'Inferior Function' which is often suggested as emerging post-

midlife, and;

(4) additional factors illustrating the experience of this time period emerging from data.

Analysis at this stage (focusing on midlife and the time following) revealed many of the midlife experiences predicted in the literature. Each case suggested a form of "breaking out", an attempt to produce a change in life structure (Levinson 1978: p201), for various reasons. Participants 1 and 4 took these decisions on the basis of dissatisfaction with the career experiences of the midlife decade. Participant 2 perceived her changes in work direction to be a natural evolution or step from work that had been done previously. For participant 3, the midlife period had produced "serious failure or decline, occurring within a stable life structure" (ibid.: p201), so an attempt to change and rebuild a life structure was forced upon him.

Participant 1, in the period after the midlife decade, returned to a childhood love of music, and commenced composing. In the context of her earlier life this represented a new and major change of work direction. Participants 2 and 4 changed the form of their work, but built this on a pre-existing skill base, (e.g. writing as a component of earlier work became a primary activity). Participant 3 commenced a completely new direction of work (counselling).

There was some limited evidence of the MBTI Inferior Function emerging more strongly from interview reports – enough to maintain this as a goal of research at this time, e.g. the emergence of feeling and relationship values in a person whose MBTI type would not indicate this as a priority.

However, other data did not seem to match that expected on the basis of existing creativity literature. The descriptions of early life and origins of creative activity indicated a person's chosen area of work did not necessarily emerge clearly in childhood or adolescence, i.e. was not necessarily understood by a participant at that time. For example, participant 2 could see continuity from her childhood to working life. She

described, as an oldest child, having to take responsibility for her younger siblings, and a wish to ensure they got a 'fair hearing' as individuals from their parents. She subsequently described this as a pattern recurring in her work as a management consultant – the wish to care for those who are vulnerable, and create a method by which their voice may be heard by those in authority.

The life story told by participant 3 was the most harrowing and distressing of any of the interviews in the entire research project. The researcher experienced distress in hearing it, and a deep concern for the participant in the process of telling it. The researcher took several occasions within the interview to check whether the participant wished to proceed, and periodic breaks were taken within the interview time.

The use of a biographic approach, coupled with discussion of creative work had secured productive data. The researcher took the decision following discussions with colleagues to proceed with this structure of investigation for the next six interviews, and to re-examine the position again having completed ten interviews.

4.2.2 Ten Interviews

Participants 5 – 10 were selected on the basis of the criteria outlined in 4.1.1 above. At this stage the researcher began to approach individuals (a) encountered in his professional activity and/or (b) not previously known to him (c) and apparently meeting these selection criteria. The sources of participant contact (covering those previously known to the researcher, those not previously known but directly approached, and those subsequently recommended by others) are described in table 4.5 at the beginning of this chapter.

Summary information on participants at this stage is as follows:

Table 4.9: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
5		x	52	**Withdrew**
6	x		47	Trainer/mngt consultant
7		x	46	Snr manager
8	x		52	Trainer/mngt consultant
9	x		54	Writer
10		x	59	Yoga teacher/writer

At this stage the researcher decided to include a selection of questions from Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study of living creative individuals to add detail to the biographic and work example information obtained. Csikszentmihalyi's interviews had been solely based on questions of this type. These questions were asked at the close of the second interview that dealt initially with a work example. The questions are tabulated below in table 4.10:

Table 4.10: Further exploratory questions included in the interview structure

Interview	Topic Areas	Example Questions
Standard questions common to all participants.	Career and Life Priorities	Of the things you have done in life, of what are you most *proud*? Has there been a particular project or *event* that has significantly *influenced* the *direction* of your career? Why do you do what you do? (What is your *motivation* for this work?)
	Relationships and Family	Has there been a *significant person* or persons in your life who has influenced or stimulated your thinking and attitudes about work? In what way(s), if any, do you think your *family background* was special in helping you to become the person you are?

Interview	Topic Areas	Example Questions
	Working habits / process	Overall, how is the way you go about your work different now from the way you worked 10 - 15 years ago?
	Attentional Structures and Dynamics	At present, what task or challenge do you see as the most important for you? Are you planning to make any changes in how you work?

(Please note: These questions were introduced from interview 6. Note was taken which questions had been asked to whom. Where a question had been introduced at a later time this was asked to earlier participants in a follow-up interview.)

This phase of the interviews brought forward new experiences in the research affecting both the conduct of interviews and the sensitivity of the researcher to the characteristics of creative activity. For example, participant 5 withdrew following the biographic interview because it brought up for her memories of painful and unresolved conflicts within her family. (This gave the researcher experience in managing the withdrawal or loss of a participant while supporting that person in a distressed state.) Participant 6 startled the researcher by describing the difficulties he had encountered in bringing his recent creative ideas into a working form in the previous 7 – 8 years – difficulties he continued to experience. These difficulties had created major personal and financial implications. It illustrated for the researcher that whatever the 'reputation' on which a person was approached, it may conceal many more things than an unbroken path of success. Participant 7 stretched or developed the researcher's understanding of the origins of creative work. Commonly portrayed in literature as an attraction towards and choice of a

specific type of work – this participant was motivated by a capacity to learn something completely new, and to achieve significant change within it. She moved through many different occupations demonstrating her ability to learn and achieve within them. She was also the first participant to make overt and repeated efforts to understand what the researcher "wanted to know" in order to tailor her responses accordingly. This, and subsequent participants had to be repeatedly informed until reassured that what the researcher "wanted" was their story not a particular outcome. Participant 9, had a reputation for authoring a particular form of theatrical entertainment. Yet he repeatedly made statements within his interviews, based on his own perception of his lack of intelligence, and on why he did not achieve "more". Participant 10 illustrated a difficulty also to be found in participant 21. At the time of the research interview it was unclear whether the participant had a reputation within a localised field. In the course of the follow-up interviews (conducted much later) clear indications transpired that a localized reputation did exist. The pattern of participant 10's story, while seemingly hugely different from others to-date, also presented a perspective on creativity which will be explained later (chapter 9) in the context of subsequent interviews where this pattern also appeared. (Her perspective involved using 'creativity' to influence the memories and after-effects of difficult life events, while others took the same approach to the effects of physical disability.)

The following list summarises the codes or analytical categories emerging from and used to analyse the interview data at this point:

- Parents

  Parents' story.

  Perception of parents.

  Parents' perception of him/her?

  Parents' goals.

Parental relationships.

- Home and family

Experiences of the early years.

Birth order.

Siblings.

Social status.

Interviewees' perception of the shaping influence of the family on themselves.

Bereavement.

- Childhood experiences

Activities enjoyed as a child.

Antecedents of creative work.

- School

Experience of school.

Experience of teachers. Mentors?

Experience of peer group.

Experience of 'learning' – subjects favoured or disliked.

Development of skills and talents? Academic progress.

Beliefs about own ability, or lack of it?

- Next steps/Career choice

Choice made?

Reasons.

Experiences of work.

Experiences of further education.

Development of skills.

Reasons for changes.

- Work Trajectory

Trajectory.

Contrasts in content/actions.

Turning points in work experiences.

- Development Pattern

Development of domain skills.

Changes in domain?

Changes in 'field'/job?

Causes/reasons.

Further education/training?

- Work Strategies

Planning.

Delivery.

Outputs.

Family/marriage/relationships.

- Mid-life Experiences

Types of experiences.

Questions raised.

New perspectives gained.

Action taken – changes made.

Indicators of 'peak achievement' at this time.

- Motivations

Work.

Other.

General.

Decade of the twenties.

Decade of the thirties.

Decade of the forties.

Decade of the fifties.

- Work changes during and after the mid-life period

Types (including single or multiple occupations).

Reasons.

Changes to discipline/domain.

Changes to 'field'.

- Work process changes

Reported changes in ways of working.

- Responses to core questions (Csikszentmihalyi 1996)

Proud of?

Biggest obstacle overcome?

Influential event or project?

Influential people? Role models – in childhood, and adulthood?

Motivation? Changes over time?

Family influences on personal development?

Future challenges?

Planned changes in work direction?

Perceived changes in self over time?

Perceived changes in the quality and quantity of work over time?

Sources of ideas.

Organisational context and influences.

(Also examined for indications of the late life style.)

(Interviewees were subsequently asked what they considered the contribution or impact of an organisational environment on their work and achievements.)

- Signs of 'discontinuity'?

Signs of conflict in the meaning/detail within data supplied by participants.

The recognition achieved by these participants within a "field" in this sample was not at the national or international level of social acclaim commonly achieved by the exceptional creative individual. These were individuals working generally within a local context. Additionally, while these participants came from different categories of Gardner's four types of creative work (i.e. master, maker, introspector and influencer), the researcher detected a common pattern from interviews – that all of these individuals saw a prime goal of their work to influence others to a new place or direction. For this reason it was decided to make these two criteria explicit in subsequent participant selection, i.e.[2]:

1. Participants had a reputation for creative work in a localized context.
2. Participants were "influencers" as defined by Gardner's (1997) work. (For example, a composer was an influencer in trying to give performers a particular experience of teamwork and music, an architect through trying to influence the way in which people would live, an artist and sculptor through trying to convey aspects of emotion and relationship to viewers.)

While the focus of research questions remained as described in section 4.3 above, (on activity and experiences in the midlife and after) the researcher had commenced analysing data on the antecedents or origins of creative activity, and the pattern of movement that occurred between "domains" of activity and "fields" of performance and recognition over the whole life span. Some data on midlife events continued to appear. For example, reports suggested experiences were in line with MBTI profiles that appeared to suggest that "extraverts" would describe greater stress on external factors (such as job loss), whereas "introverts" would describe internal experiences (such as felt dissatisfaction). There were some indications of changes to both domain and field as a result of those

[2] A potential error in design at this point was not to specify a time reference for these criteria, e.g. a reputation throughout life. For this reason participants were involved with different duration of reputation, which provided an underlying development pattern to examine.

experiences. While some data emerged (e.g. from participant 6) on the MBTI "Inferior Function", there was no discernible appearance of it in the other participants (7, 8, 9, and 10). While the researcher continued to review interview texts for this data, this was a clear indication that this research question was unproductive.

Three participants (2, 4, 6) made direct references in hindsight to peaks of organisational power and achievement being achieved during the midlife decade, with participant 1 implying the same conclusion. This is in line with theories that suggest individuals achieve peaks of creative productivity and recognition in the midlife decade (e.g. Lehman 1953). In each case the participants described the achievement as context-specific, to a particular organisation. They also described moving on from these circumstances with the clear belief that further work and personal developments were yet to be achieved, i.e. they didn't see midlife as a 'peak' at that time, or the work in this context the only peak that they would achieve.

The arrangements for interviews – timings, introductions and means of conducting interviews - appeared to be effective regardless of a participant's background, and whether these individuals were previously known to the researcher or not.

The main changes as a result of this initial analysis were to add "influencer" in a localized context to the criteria for participant selection, and the introduction of additional interview questions.

4.2.3 Fifteen Interviews

As described above the researcher included an additional selection criterion to the choice of participants – that they were performing a role that may be defined as "influencer" as defined by Howard Gardner's use of that term. Additionally, the source of participants had tended to be those approached by the researcher directly, although not previously known to him, and participants recommended by others as meeting these selection criteria. Their details are as follows:

Table 4.11: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
11	x		47	Trainer/mngt *consultant*
12	x		47	Youth worker
13	x		55	Teacher (Outdoor pursuits.)
14	x		52	Trainer/mngt consultant
15	x		53	Trainer/writer

The participants were those with reputations established in a localized context, rather the national or social acclaim associated with the exceptional creative individual.

Further additions were made to the standard questions asked in interview 2. These are shown in bold print in the table below. The questions on 'obstacles' and sources of ideas for work are drawn from the Csikszentmihalyi (1996) study. The question on stress was included at this time to establish whether any further data might emerge on the MBTI Inferior Function. Inferior function behaviours are claimed to be linked to times when individuals are under stress.[3] The reflective or retrospective question on the quality or quantity of an individuals' work was included to determine whether any data could be found to contrast with theories on the decline of both quality and quantity of creative work after the midlife period.

Table 4.12: Further additions to standard interview 'open' questions

Interview	**Topic Areas**	**Example Questions**
Standard Questions common to all participants.	Career and life priorities.	Of the things you have done in life, of what are you most *proud*? **Of all the *obstacles* you have**

[3] The theory on the IF suggests it may influence work behaviours and by implication creativity. The possibility of articulating this link led to the researcher continuing to attempt to identify its presence

Interview	Topic Areas	Example Questions
		encountered in your life, which was the hardest to overcome? Has there been a particular project or *event* that has significantly *influenced* the *direction* of your career? Why do you do what you do? (What is your *motivation* for this work?) Has this *changed* across your 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond?
	Relationships and Family	Has there been a *significant person* or persons in your life who has influenced or stimulated your thinking and attitudes about work? In what way(s), if any, do you think your *family background* was special in helping you to become the person you are?
	Working habits / process Attentional Structures and Dynamics	**Where do the ideas for your work generally come from?** Overall, how is the way you go about your work different now from the way you worked 10 - 15 years ago? At present, what task or challenge do you see as the most important for you? **What stresses you, if**

Interview	Topic Areas	Example Questions
		anything, within the context of your daily life? Are you planning to make any changes in how you work? **Are there any comments you could make to me about the quality and quantity of your work now, versus 10 - 15 years ago?**

The MBTI sample at this stage reflected a clear orientation towards the "Intuitive Feeling" (NF) quadrant of the sixteen "types". While this information raised a question about the structure of the participant sample, it is in line with that expected with the occupations present. MBTI theory anticipates that an individual's type will reflect an orientation to a particular form of work. The "intuitive feeling" types would be sensitive both to people and to circumstances of potential for change. Therefore it was predictable, within type theory, that this composition of participants could occur (e.g. Myers and McCauley 1985) It must be acknowledged that the researcher is also one of the four NF "intuitive feeling" types and the question must be raised as to whether this has influenced the selection of participants? The researcher initially actively sought out participants with different work experiences to his own. He subsequently approached individuals he had learnt of by reputation, but without knowing them personally. He recognised he was more aware of participants with reputations in fields allied to his own. He finally approached individuals he did not know at all, who had been recommended by others. A number of these were professionals in allied fields where intuitive feeling types would be expected to predominate. For these reasons he believes that the factor of comparable type to his own is an issue of occupational fit.

The broad structure of information arising from interview analysis had begun to settle – the 'higher level' groups within which sub categories or codes were placed, illustrated in the table below. The more detailed analytical categories are illustrated on page 162 above.

Table 4.13: Interview analysis categories and sub categories:

Category	Current Description
1. The first or earliest appearance of the creative skill or aptitude.	
2. Development Patterns	Ways in which this skill or aptitude was developed or nurtured.
3. The Life Structure.	The components, and balance given to them, by participants in structuring their life between early- and mid-adulthood, (e.g. work, family, social activities.)
4. The 'trajectory' of work.	The pattern in which the individuals work and/or creative activity develops.
5. The characteristics of work in early adulthood.	Definable characteristics of an individual's work, to be contrasted with those after the mid-life period.
6. Mid-life experiences.	Experiences of participants in the mid-life period, analysed against a specific structure.
7. The characteristics of work in mid-adulthood.	Definable characteristics of an individual's work, to be contrasted with those prior to the mid-life period.
8. The relationship of mid-life experiences and subsequent characteristics of work.	Did the mid-life experiences affect subsequent patterns and characteristics of work? How?
9. Other issues	Strategies

Category	Current Description
	Motivation/changes

The analysis of data from childhood and adolescence offered direct comparisons with the development found in the exceptional creative individual. Categories of information and analysis (e.g. antecedents of creative activity – social class – birth order – parental influence on childhood activities – bereavement and schooling) found in the body of literature (e.g. Goertzel and Goertzel 1978) are found in this research data – although this was not reviewed until after this point in the research project because later life had been the primary approach until this time.

The examination of adult life provided indications of life structure and personal priorities of participants. Patterns were examined which indicated how individuals choose their work area, and movement between domains and fields of activity. This information was contrasted with the development of the exceptional creative individual. For example, this sample demonstrated a higher incidence of movement between domains and fields than has been found to occur with the exceptional creative individual. This could indicate a potential loss of accumulated focus, expertise and acknowledgement in these areas for the "ordinary" creative individual.

The research questions were subsequently amended to include a fuller focus on earlier life. The examination of the midlife period added further to the data and experiences gained from earlier interviews. The same pattern of analysis was used at this stage as at the examination of ten interviews. No new data had emerged on the MBTI inferior function, or other areas.

Against this background the researcher decided to:

- continue the focus in subsequent interviews on the "influencers" and the "ordinary" creative individual;

- attempt an occupational contrast between the influencers being examined, i.e. were different developmental influences to be found for individuals working one-to-one, in groups or in organisational settings?

4.2.4 Thirty Interviews

The characteristics of the additional participants interviewed at this stage are summarised in the table below:

Table 4.14: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
16		x	59	Trainer/mngt consultant
17		x	59	Trainer / Counsellor
18		x	55	Artist/sculptor
19	x		49	Trainer/mngt consultant
20		x	48	Trainer/mngt consultant
21	x		49	Trainer/counsellor
22	x		59	Trainer/mngt consultant
23	x		55	Managing Director
24	x		51	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
25		x	50	Psychotherapist
26	x		58	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
27		x	45	Company Director
28		x	53	Trainer/Outplacement Consultant
29	x		50	C. of E. Vicar
30	x		53	Psychotherapist

From this phase of research the focus was on developmental experiences and influences across the whole of the life span. The literature focus until that time had been almost

exclusively on the second half of life. It required, therefore, a considerable effort to provide and gain the theoretical background for this additional work on the earlier period. The researcher found, for example, the childhood and adolescence experiences or categories emerging directly from the interview texts related to a high degree with those used and portrayed in the literature on the exceptional creative individual. (For example, parental background and behaviours, the antecedents of creative work, the experiences of schooling.)

The initial focus on participant background in this phase was on the three broad occupational categories described in table 4.4 above - organisationally employed, self-employed and working one-to-one with others. This was used in the hope or expectation of achieving contrasting data between the three groups. What emerged, however, reinforced the two 'story' categories initially identified in the analysis completed of the first fifteen interviews. These were of individuals who identified their area of work and subsequent creative achievement in childhood and adolescence, and those for whom it took longer, sometimes well into adulthood.. The first 'story' was the same as the stereotypical background of the exceptional creative individual commonly described in historical or biographic literature (e.g. Ochse 1990, Goertzel et al 1978). The suggestion of another route, i.e. the discovery of a work interest in adulthood, was rarely acknowledged in the literature, although it is present in Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) research with living participants. The reported experiences of participants in 'story 1' were generally more positive than those found in 'story 2', for example in the nature and specific type of support they received from parents in childhood and adolescence for their domain of interest. The difference between the two stories held into adulthood. For example, in both childhood and adolescence, the 'story 1' participants were influenced by role models and other influential adults more of the time than the 'story 2' participants.

A review of the early adult experiences revealed a pattern of changing both field and domain of work that was certainly untypical of the exceptional creative individual. In

the case of the exceptional creative individual, the ability to work in a novel and original way is attributed to a specific focus on both domain and field for a sustained period. The examination of this data also allowed an exploration of the life structure decisions/priorities chosen by participants, and consideration whether factors adapted from Amabile's componential model of creativity could be used to illustrate how and when contributory factors to creative work had been found over time (e.g. the choice of domain of work, and the presence of intrinsic motivation).

An examination of the midlife period continued to reveal the kind of experiences predicted by adult development literature on this subject. The use of the MBTI indicated that sensing types tended to have more settled and unchanging career paths than intuitive types, and that in the midlife period the former appeared to manage these experiences more easily than the latter. It provided an opportunity to test questions implied in the work of Jaques (1965) and others on whether work patterns, including creative work, changes in both form and process during this time period.

A review of the middle-age period did not reveal any evidence of the 'late life style' at this stage. It did, however, continue to provide examples of how an individual's work may change and develop as a result of midlife experiences.

Against this background it was decided to attempt to achieve a more equal balance of participants between 'story 1' and 'story 2' groups. The first thirty interviews had only yielded a proportionally smaller group in the first category.

4.2.5 Forty Interviews

The researcher decided, therefore, to make the final interviews centred on increasing this participant group 1 - the early starters - to better understand their background. Where possible he also attempted to achieve a more even balance between the three occupational categories, and also to increase the number of women within the participant group. On receiving a recommendation of a potential participant the researcher attempted to

determine whether their career path had been indicative of a clear choice made in early adulthood and developed from that time. The researcher used this as a likely indicator of a 'group 1' participant. This was not always successful – and two of the final interviewees emerged as group 2 participants. The characteristics of the final 11 participants are outlined below.

Table 4.15: Participant Data by Gender, Age and Occupation

Interview No.	Male	Female	Age	Occupation
31	x		49	Company Director
32	x		53	Advertising Executive
33	x		54	NGO Chief Exec.
34	x		51	Senior Manager
35	x		50	Senior Manager
36		x	58	Singer/voice teacher
37	x		52	Osteopath / trainer
38		x	53	Trainer/mngt consultant
39		x	53	Writer
40		x	50	Manager
41		x	58	Trainer/mngt consultant

The analysis of the sample follows in Chapters 5 - 9:

1. Chapter 5: Childhood and adolescence (up to 18 years old).
2. Chapter 6: Early adulthood (18 – 35 years old).
3. Chapter 7: The midlife period (35 – 45 years old).
4. Chapter 8: Middle age (45 – 60 years old).
5. Chapter 9: Other Factors.

Overall, the study migrated from work on the effects of midlife on creativity to a study of creative development across the life span on 'ordinary creatives' recognised locally for their creative work in the role of influencer.

4.3 Overview of Results

This thesis reviews the life span development of 40 creative individuals. The data is compared with research relating to the normal life span development, a systems theory of creativity, and the life span development experiences of the gifted and exceptionally creative individual. The use of these three theoretical frameworks is intended to increase the possibility of identifying previously unknown contributory developmental influences on this group of creative influencers. The use of data from biographic studies of exceptional creative individuals is not, however, intended as a direct comparison given the differences between the samples. Direct comparison would require further research based on similar sample groups.

Due to the size of this task, and to support the reader in 'navigating' this complexity, an overview of results follows.

4.3.1 The Two 'Core Stories'

The primary pattern of analysis and data presentation within this thesis is that of two groups, or stories, as described in 4.2.5 above. The first group of early starters (n = 18) identifies with and develops a skill and/or motivation in the childhood years, takes this into adulthood and onwards to middle age. The second, a group of later starters (n = 22) encountered an activity or experience in the same years, but did not make a choice to develop that area until later on in life. The life stories of this second group are indicative of a period of searching and development of their subsequently chosen area of activity.

The researcher proposes that these two stories are indicative of two of the primary patterns or questions in literature on creativity and the gifted. The life stories of the exceptional creative individual and the gifted individual commonly, though not exclusively, indicate a relationship with a domain that develops in childhood and is taken through and worked on in adult life. Additionally, there are also research findings that indicate that those individuals who start early, produce earlier and continue through adulthood will be those who contribute more, and who make notable contributions (Simonton 1988; Albert 1994; Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The researcher proposes that in the area of 'localized' creativity, a similar development pattern is demonstrated in group 1. Group 2 may represent a more common pattern among 'ordinary creative' activity.

Both groups allow an exploration of the question expressed in literature on the gifted (e.g. Gruber 1986) as to how and why does a gift become 'active'. A reported relationship with an area of interest that does not get supported and confirmed in childhood in group 2 – and the subsequent searching for an activity of their choice - allows for developmental perspectives on this question.

The stories told by these participants suggest a developmental model for creative activity over the life span period reviewed in this research from these two perspectives. An overview of the main results gained from these data are presented overleaf in diagrammatic form.

Developmental Issue: The receipt of practical support from adults and the growth of confidence to continue and develop this work choice, or not.

		Post school:	**Work Development (21/2 y.o. – 30 y.o.)**	**30 – 35 years old.**
Group 1: (The 'Early Starters')	*Specific* parental support: For 'individual identity' For activities and the development of that activity. Contribution of influential adults. More positive exp of schooling.	The support received influences the relationship with education, and the amount undertaken. Education which supports and confirms that choice and relationship with the domain of activity.	A choice of work is made. The 'search' is for 'where' rather than 'what'. Early decisions on work location may be tentative. The choice is commonly influenced by a role model demonstrating the potential of work/work practices.	Moves from one work place ('field') to another are generally to strengthen experience.
Finding and relating to a domain of activity				
Group 2: (The 'Later Starters')	*Generalized* support from parents. E.g. "Get good grades" associated with extrinsic standards. Or: No perceived support. Fewer influential adults More negative exp of schooling	Various routes taken into early adulthood: A choice of work, subsequently changed. Uncertainty about which choice. "Drifting".	A choice of work is made, and remade. Or: There is uncertainty or drifting commonly based in self-doubt or negative self-perception. Or: A work choice is made as a means of finding something they care about.	A role model influences their understanding of who they are as individuals. Work changes reflect searching for 'their' work.

Childhood and adolescence (up to 18 years old.)	**Early Adulthood (18 – 35 years old.)**

	The MidLife Decade		Middle Age		
Group 1:	Evidence of a personal dream before midlife (which may have eased these experiences).	A change in the quality *and* content of work – and changes to work processes.			
Shared experiences / reports of Group 1 *and* Group 2	Role and relationship changes, e.g. children less dependent, parents more so. Evidence of "generativity vs. stagnation" (Erikson's 7th Stage of Life Cycle.) Continuity *and* discontinuity with the past. *Personal re-evaluation.* Psychological turning points.	A decision to change or break with employment or work direction. A new work direction could be context – field – changed role – new customers. Evolving newly found work. "Self-ownership" – a 'tone' of personal confidence and responsibility.	A range of changes occurring at diff. rates within participant group. E.g.: Increased skill and improvements to work methods. Increased confidence, interpersonal and emotional skills. Changing beliefs about self and world. Aligning 'self' with work.	A broad range of new work and activities. New work methods. A 'systemic' focus to work activity. New perspectives on work. Learning new work methods.	***Participants talk in a different way in this time period. It is as if the 'heat' or the 'emotion' has gone out of the story. They are calmer, more relaxed, more at ease with who they are – or who they now know themselves to be.***
Group 2:	Illness and depression. Two thirds consider what actions to be involved with in future.	Pattern of 'reacting' to changes, i.e. responding to external events.			
	Life Changes	**Work Changes**	**Individual Changes**	**Work Changes**	

Chapter 5 – Childhood and Adolescence (to 18 years old)

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the following research question:

Research Question 1: (a) What early developmental patterns seem significant in ordinary creative individuals? (b) How do these compare with those found in "exceptional" creative individuals and normal life span development?

This chapter will present:

- Results from the childhood and adolescence period in the biographies of participants.
- The factors include standard demographic factors and those commonly found in examinations of the lives of exceptional creative individuals. It should be noted, however, that these categories also emerged from within the analysis of the participants' stories. These are:

- 5.2 Early roots of later creativity.
- 5.3 Social class and occupational background of parents.
- 5.4 Birth order.
- 5.5 Parental influence.
- 5.6 Disability and illness.
- 5.7 Experience of bereavement during childhood and adolescence.
- 5.8 Schooling and education.
- 5.9 The presence and influence of role models, mentors or influential adults.

- Other categories examined include the following:

- 5.10 The experience of women participants. (This is important as much of research on creative lives has been based on the experiences of men alone).

- 5.11 The way, if at all, the biographies of these individuals communicate the life-span development experiences portrayed by the theories of Daniel Levinson and Erik Erikson.
- 5.12 Developmental patterns of creativity.
- 5.13 Clarity of direction and motivation on entry into the Early Adult Transition.

Information for each of these areas will be presented in tabular form, followed by explanatory comments and quotes from participants where appropriate.

A primary aim of this thesis has become to examine what influences shaped the individual patterns, in addition to understanding the developmental similarities and differences of this group with exceptional creative individuals. To that end, data will be presented within each section in the following sequence:

- findings from within this participant group supplemented by examples;
- comparison with research on the exceptional creative individual;
- a consideration of other background factors, such as life span developmental theories.

Three patterns of creative development were apparent at this early stage of life. These patterns emerged from the analysis of the participants' stories. They are:

1. The steady development of a childhood interest or aptitude into an adult work activity, subsequently recognised as excellent. (Described in the research as 'group 1' – the "Early Starters".)
2. A brief childhood manifestation of an aptitude, a period of 'ordinariness', and then a later 'flowering' into acknowledged creative activity. (Described in the research as 'group 2' – the "Later Starters".)

3. No evidence of an aptitude in childhood, a period of 'ordinariness', and then a later 'flowering into acknowledged creative activity. (This also forms a description of some participants in group 2.)

5.2 Early Roots of Later Creativity.

What was the starting-place or origin of the creative work? Where did the talent or possibility of creative activity first show itself? The commonest view in the majority of historical literature on this subject is that the talent will appear in childhood and adolescence references. The child will relate to it, and develop it from this point.

The link between childhood interests and adult activity was not addressed directly in this study, with the intention of avoiding or limiting any tendency to 'lead' participants to make immediate connections. Participants were asked, "what activities do you remember from childhood", and/or "what activities gave you pleasure as a child".

This category emerged as an early and primary differentiation within the research group. It differentiated into two distinct participant groups and will be a central thread and contrast in this examination until the 30's – where the developmental activity of the two groups, the two stories, appeared to start to converge.

Table 5.1: The described antecedents of creative work in childhood.

Category	Nos:	%	Participant Nos:
Group 1: The "Early Starters". A childhood skill, motivation and/or experiences related directly to adult creativity.			
A direct connection to a specific skill found in and developed from childhood.	**8**	(44%)	(2, 6, 13, 15, 18, 29, 36, 39.)
A direct connection to a motivation found in and developed from childhood, and used in one or more work/skill areas.	**5**	(28%)	(7, 11, 19, 24, 40.)

Category	Nos:	%	Participant Nos:
Experiences in childhood and adolescence that fed an occupational choice made at university or directly after.	**5**	(28%)	(31, 32, 33, 35, 41.)
TOTAL	**18**	(100%)	
Group 2: The "Later Starters". Either no reported antecedent to adult creativity, or not one that was understood or related to during childhood and adolescence.			
A direct connection with subsequent creative activity, seen in childhood, yet not practised or developed for some years after.	**5**	(23%)	(1, 9, 21, 22, 25.)
An orientation to a skill, or some component of the skill, seen in childhood, yet not practised or developed for some years.	**10**	(45%)	(3, 4, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, 37.)
No visible / reported antecedent in biographic descriptions of childhood. (Creativity also did not appear within these biographies for some years after formal education.)	**7**	(32%)	(8, 14, 27, 28, 30, 34, 38.)
TOTAL	**22**	(100%)	

In the first of the two groups illustrated above 18 participants described a direct connection to a creative activity, motivation or experience originating in the childhood and adolescence years. This pattern of early association with subsequent domains of creative activity or performance is common in studies of the exceptional creative individual and gifted individuals in a variety of domains (Ochse 1990, Gardner 1993, Winner 1995). However, the results of this research have three further characteristics (described below) rather than simply relating to a skill or talent.

First, a direct connection to a specific skill found in and developed from childhood. For example: For one participant it was sports, played actively as a child, taught as an adult,

and developed subsequently into a medium for teaching other issues such as teamwork. As a child, he described playing:

> "... non-stop cricket and soccer. Every opportunity I had my clothes off and my shorts on, I was in the gym doing something. (...) My father was cricket and soccer mad, and I had been brought up with this – and I was hopeless at both. (...) And then I got presented with this oval ball that you could pick up in your hands and run with, bump into people, knock them, a bit of rough and tumble. I loved it! In a lot of ways rugby saved my life at school, it got me into taking something seriously and into serious training".

For another participant, architecture was an interest as a child, along with its implications for the quality of living for individuals and communities, studied in school, learnt as a profession, and practiced in many fields. He described:

> "Sometime around the age of 12 I decided I really loved looking at buildings, drawing them, and working out how they worked, and how they all got together. And so I started drawing fantasy buildings. I got involved with an architect called (name) at the time he was architect for (a major university town), and he encouraged me, and lent me books, and gave me books. So I was determined to become an architect".

The second sub-group included those where a motivation that had appeared in childhood, stayed with them through the adult years. Often, this motivation led them to take up a variety of work in their adult life. For example:

> "I was an only child, so in a sense was always very independent ... always think for yourself, do things for yourself, don't rely on others. ... I didn't get wrapped up in activities, I'd do lots of things, I'd constantly change. I enjoyed school because of doing lots of different things. ... I always got a bigger kick at doing something

> at school nobody else did. For example, I was the first one ever to learn Russian. I only did it because nobody else had ever done it."

This participant (7) acknowledged that this pattern of motivation (learning new things and being involved in change) had never altered for her and had influenced her work direction and changes throughout adult life. The researcher has not detected this pattern discussed in relevant literature on creativity – the pursuit of a motivation rather than a specific work or skill.

The third sub-group described experiences in childhood and adolescence that formed the basis of a work choice in the early adult transition (18 – 22 years old). For example:

> "I remember thinking that an awful lot of what happened in my family when I was a kid was enormously unjust. My father was a man of his time – very cold and emotionally unexpressive. So ... complications for him were very difficult, and so he would resort to a cane and that sort of stuff. I remember a tremendous feeling of injustice about all that. So I can remember the theme of justice and injustice being around at the time. The other theme is what I was saying earlier, I remember the ethos of that family at the time – that concern for other people was out of order! And that being interested in the wider world was not for us. And that education, culture, learning, books, was not your lot!"

All of these themes (i.e. justice, concern for others, education) have been seen in this individual's (33) life and integrated into his work since that time. This theme of discomfort with home life is found in the literature on the exceptional creative individual. Yet within this participant group they are described as life experiences that influenced subsequent choices.

The individuals in group one, the "Early Starters" demonstrate some characteristics that are also found in the literature on the exceptional creative individual now, and throughout this

thesis data. During childhood and adolescence an early discovery of an area of interest develops into an area of work in adulthood.

The remaining twenty two have been grouped into a second group, the "Later Starters", where an on-going connection to work is not reported as being operationalised in childhood and adolescence.

In this second group five participants reported a direct connection with their subsequent work; they did not recognise it as a career or work choice in these early years. In some cases there was a gap of many years before this link occurred and they returned to work in an area that interested them as a child.

For example, for two participants (1, 9), the interest represented a love for, and learning of a core skill involved in subsequent work – for the composer, it was music and for the writer it was a love for stories, and writing.

The composer described:

> " ... as a child, as early as 4 years old, one of my joys was putting on theatre, plays, particularly musicals for my family. (...) They used to have hysterics because I was a small fat person, playing the Broadway Busby Berkely dancing types".

The writer said:

> "I've always had the ability to write. I can remember, at school, I loved doing compositions and essays. (...) The first thing I ever wrote that got published was 'the story of the sparrow'. It was in my junior school, in the top class, we were all asked to write for a book about nature for the younger children. (...) I wrote about the house sparrow, and I was the only one that did. Lots of other people wrote individual things

that got published, but mine was the only one about the house sparrow, and it got published. I still have it in the loft upstairs".

For ten participants there appeared to be an indirect relationship, an orientation to an area or a skill described in a childhood activity yet not recognised at the time as a potential course of work in adult life. It was, therefore, not practised or developed for some years.

For example: Participant (3), who became a counsellor in his late thirties, had a boyhood spent on sea coasts and cliffs, watching wildlife and sea life. He said:

"I picked up very quickly the relationship between the organism and the environment. And how it's no good just railing at the environment if you're imperiled. There's something about moving, to accept what is coming towards you, *and move, and shift* to a safer place. It's no good staying, and being hurt, and being poisoned, and being polluted."

He subsequently related this understanding to ways an individual can respond in his/her environment, and a need to respond actively in the face of difficulties.

For seven of group 2 there was no discernible link displayed or reported within the stories/biographies told to the researcher between events, activities and loves of the childhood or teenage years and the work they subsequently undertake.

In summary, some form of early sign of adult creative work is visible in the childhood years for 33 of the 40 total participants regardless of what point in life they recognised this, and chose to adopt this work. It applies directly to all participants in group 1, the "Early Starters", and partially, or indirectly to participants in group 2, the "Later Starters".

There is visible or reported interest in the area of eventual creativity for some participants in group 2, yet the connection is not made, the talent is not activated at that time. It raises the question why later, not then, and what were the consequences of this delay. An examination of this factor will commence later in this chapter, and be one of the themes that continues through the remainder of the thesis.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) and Ochse (1990) each report on the experiences of individuals in a variety of work domains. Ochse suggests all creative adults exhibit clear links between their work and childhood activity. Csikszentmihalyi reported only finding this in half his sample. The experiences of these 'ordinary' participants fall somewhere between those found by Ochse and Csikszentmihalyi, with an early association and a pattern of later finding of an area of interest.

The life cycle theories of Erik Erikson also offer a perspective at this point. The ability of an individual to relate to a competence, a form of activity with which they chose to move into adult life, is an indication of the formation of identity (within his life cycle stages 3 and 4). This would suggest that this measure of creative/work or skill identity formation occurred more strongly in participant group 1, and possibly less strongly in group 2. While some reasons for this will be observed as part of this research there may, of course, be others that did not appear in the interviews. For example, there is a possibility that group 2 participants focused on other priorities than a work activity and did not describe this in interview, and had clear identities in other areas, e.g. home.

5.3 Social Class / Occupational Background of Parents

In the creativity literature social class and parental occupational background contribute to development through access to role models, and particular values, which are a potential influence on the creative individual.

Social class and parental occupation was not addressed directly in interview. The following information was drawn from participants' descriptions:

Table 5.2: Social class and occupation of parent

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Class:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Upper-middle class. e.g. Company owner/director. Sea captain. Lawyer. Senior armed forces officer.	**4**	(22%)	**7**	(32%)	(2, 31, 35, 41.) (3, 8, 17, 23, 27, 30, 38.)
Middle class. e.g. Managers. Teachers. Salesman. Accounting/administrative/clerical. Armed forces officer. Publican. Farmer. Engineer.	**12**	(67%)	**14**	(64%)	(7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40.) (1, 4, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 37.)
Working class. e.g. Labouring / skilled use of hands.	**1**	(6%)	**Nil**		(6.).
Unclear from within biographic reports.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	(19.) (34.)

This sample of participants has a predominantly middle and upper-middle class background as measured by parents' occupation, with no discernable difference between group 1 and group 2 participants. The social class background of historical creative individuals in a variety of work domains has been described as having been consistently one of professional occupations, with 80% of fathers of exceptionally creative individuals being in professional occupations - and being middle to upper-middle class (Chambers 1964; Zuckerman 1977; Ochse 1990). This, arguably, reflects a historical or 'dated' nature of the research reviewed where, for example, individuals in creative occupations in the last century may have needed to come from a particular social or professional class in order to achieve access to the education required. Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993), reviewing a sample of current gifted teenagers, also report that a parental background of professional occupations was also dominant in that group. But Csikszentmihalyi (1996), with a living, and more recent sample (also from a variety of work domains) found

circumstances to be more diverse to a far greater degree, reflecting improved access to education and occupation across social classes.

The sample group in this thesis has a mixed social class background. Whether this is a function of participant selection or a contributing variable in the overall development of creativity is unclear. The parents of this participant group were largely "middle class". The parents were also individuals who had lived through the 1930s' depression. Some, evidently, came from very disadvantaged backgrounds and had moved through 'class' boundaries in their own occupational work. The results reported by participants who crossed 'class boundaries' were mixed.

For example: one participant (from Group 1) described her father as a self-taught man in a skilled/professional occupation. He communicated to her such a love of words and writing that it had a major impact on her own study and work choice. A male participant (from group 2) described how his father had worked his way up from an unskilled role to that of a qualified, skilled and very senior professional. The contrast between his work environment and his social origins appeared to have been an on-going source of stress to him, and his priority for his son was reflected in strong yet unspecific support for education and professional qualification – it didn't matter to him in what. This appeared to be reflected in his son's own confusion over work choices.

5.4 Birth Order

Birth order reflects the position within the family group, and influences the extent to which an individual may have received the undivided attention and stimulation of adults, for at least part of their development.

Table 5.3: Birth order of participants:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Birth Order:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Only child.	**7**	(39%)	**5**	(23%)	(7, 11, 15, 18, 19, 24, 35.) (8, 10, 14, 23, 26.)
Eldest child.	**4**	(22%)	**6**	(27%)	(2, 6, 13, 39.) (1, 16, 22, 27, 34, 37.)
Large gap to the next oldest child. (i.e. an elder sibling 9+ years older, away from their experience of childhood as a result of school age or leaving home).	**Nil**	-	**4**	(18%)	(3, 9, 17, 25.)
Other (middle or youngest child).	**6**	(33%)	**6**	(27%)	(31, 32, 33, 36, 40, 41.) (4, 12, 20, 21, 30, 38.)
Unclear from biographies.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	(29.) (28.)

Considering the participant group overall, 26 out of 40 (65%) are either the eldest or only child, or experience similar effects by having a significantly older sibling. Just over half the total participants (22 out of 40, or 55%) are only or eldest children.

Research on the lives and development of the exceptional creative individual suggests it is common to find they are the only or eldest child. This effect is also found in literature on gifted children, e.g. Albert 1994. The literature also suggests that different areas of achievement may also relate to different circumstances of birth order (Ochse 1990; Albert 1980; Goertzel et al 1978; Walberg et al 1979; Simonton 1987; Adams 1970). Simonton (1987: p136) reports different birth orders can influence the type of achievement reached by the individual (e.g. political leaders were commonly not first-born.) Simonton suggests literature on this subject is "vast and confusing" (p136), and the actual outcome for the individual is influenced by many variables. The percentages of 'first-born' varies significantly with sample groups, with Ochse quoting ranges from 35 – 57% (p64/5) and Albert (1994: p293) quoting 50%+. The incidence of 'first-borns' in this overall participant group parallels that of the highest percentage found in existing research on

exceptional creative individuals in a variety of domains and to some findings for gifted children.

The effect of being first-born was commented on by some participants who recognised an impact, but no clear conclusions emerged as to what this is. For example: a female participant in group 1 described:

> "... being the eldest and only child ... you go forth by yourself. You don't have brothers and sisters to tag along with! And if you want to do anything you are on your own! So I would catch the bus to go into the library (and) make my first journeys to school. And I think that is very important in becoming a writer, because it is taking a risk to find the story."

A male participant (34) in group 2 described:

> "Being the oldest means that for all that early part of your life you are ahead of your siblings, because you simply know more, you have been around longer, and you simply have higher skill levels ... Outside the house ... you are interacting in a more peer environment."

Research literature has commonly put superior examination performance of first-borns down to greater parental expectations for first-borns. A similar influence may apply with creativity and its development. Since the average number of children in most families is close to 2, the percentage of first born or only children in this sample may not be that significantly different from chance.

5.5 Parental Influence

Parental influences include the values communicated, and activities supported by parents, in addition to the parental style and emotional atmosphere in the home. Within the systems theory of creativity parents act as one of the primary components of the 'field' influencing access to a domain of work (Feldman et al 1994; Csikszentmihalyi 1996).

The influence of parents on the development of a creative life is complex. Nevertheless three main factors emerge:

1. The communication of certain priorities and values, for example intellectual achievement.
2. Support for the development of an ability, or at the very least for an intense interest or curiosity about the world at large.
3. The emotional background or experiences within the home, apart from the two matters described above, which is commonly described in negative terms.

There is a contrast in circumstances reported in interview between 'group 1', who have identified their aptitude, and are working towards its development, and 'group 2', the larger group who, as yet, have not developed an on-going relationship with an aptitude, or direction of work.

Table 5.4: Examples of parental or family influence described by participants:

Note – participants may be found in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Parental or family influence:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Apparently 'positive' influences:					
An introduction or initiation into the area of interest or work via the family.	**12**	(67%)	**4**	(18%)	(2, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39, 40.) (1, 21, 22, 25.)
A reinforcement of the value of education and a work ethic.	**11**	(61%)	**13**	(59%)	(2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 19, 29, 31, 32, 39, 40.) (1, 4, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Apparently 'negative' influences:					
Alienation from the experience of the family, one or both parents, or their wishes.	**2**	(11%)	**3**	(14%)	(6, 33.) (3, 9, 30.)
Poor self-image, the experience of significant self-doubt or lack of self-confidence.	**1**	(5%)	**7**	(32%)	(2.) (1, 3, 9, 16, 17, 26, 30.)
The description of a difficult or strained emotional environment within the home. (This may reflect one or both parents, but commonly the father.)	**6**	(33%)	**12**	(55%)	(6, 11, 18, 29, 35, 41.) (1, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 21, 23, 26, 30, 34, 37.)
Participants who describe the home and/or parents as a model of how they choose *not* to be/act.	**3**	(17%)	**9**	(41%)	(6, 11, 33.) (1, 3, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 30.)

The final four out of the six categories above are portrayed as 'negative' experiences. Within group 1, more positive experiences and fewer negative experiences are reported in contrast with group 2. In particular, twelve out of eighteen (67%) from group 1 experienced their parents as having directly and specifically contributed to their introduction to what became their area of creative activity.

For example: In the first group, the future sports teacher (13) described living:

> "... very close to the local grammar school, to which my father went when he was a lad, and my uncle. And the staff came to our pub to drink every night. My father was an active member of the Old Boys Association, and used to go up there every weekend to watch them play cricket, and so on".

He described an atmosphere in which assumptions had been established that he would follow a certain level of education, and particular activities as a result of his Father's background.

A female management consultant and writer (2) described her mother:

> "She trained as a lawyer, (unusual in those days) yet she could never practise. It meant that even though she was at home with us as kids, she was very active in the world of volunteering. (...) Because of my Father's culture he didn't want her to work. But it meant she never gave a clear message (...) that your destiny is to grow up and get married. (...) At one point, that got me out of the traditions of my upbringing, she fought tooth and nail for my Father to let me go to the best university, even though the local one would have been good enough for him".

However the experiences in Group 1 were not uniformly positive. For example:

One trainer (6) described:

> "The family didn't work for me particularly. It was a lot of things, and I choose not to remember them, the dreadful relationship within the family, it was just awful. I couldn't wait to get away from them. It was just awful. And as soon as I left home I couldn't wait to get away from them".

Yet despite this experience, he still acknowledged the influence of his Mother on his education, and subsequent work:

> " ... my Mother died in 1990, and my drive declined after that. (...) (Through her) I was driven to do better, energy and drive were important in whatever context".

Another participant (11) said:

> "(My parents) were always fairly alienated people in a way. They both came from large families (in Lancashire) and had come south to run away from the things they didn't like about their life "up north". (...) My Mother was a very nervous, very neurotic woman, which created problems. (Yet) Mum particularly was very, very powerful in wanting me to have a good education at an intellectual level. They worked bloody hard for it, they struggled for it, to give me a really good education and clearly I am a result of that education".

Group 2 had a more contrasting and varied experience in the family environment and frequently more 'negative'.

Discord within the parental relationship and/or the family environment is a theme reported for 12 out of 22 of this group. In some cases this negatively influenced the support received by the participants – in others the value of education was still communicated. Also, there were overt references to self-doubt or lack of self-confidence originating in early family life.

For example: A writer (9) described negative experiences that affected his self-perception for many years:

> " ... home life, when I was younger, wasn't very harmonious in many respects. My Mum always had time, and listened, and was aware of, and had a great deal of

> empathy for what I was doing. (But) my Dad would find fault with anything I did, which wasn't easy. (...) he wasn't easy to get on with – thank god there is more of my Mum in me than him. He was very dogmatic, very dictatorial, he was always right, and anything I did was always laughable or wrong. And it sort of got you down."

Other participants reported encouragement. A disabled man (12), with a childhood heavily defined by physical restrictions, visits to hospital, and consequent periods of recovery, said:

> "My parents, because of my disability, could have wrapped me in cotton wool, and stopped me from doing things, all sorts of things. But they let me loose, and it was always Mother who ended up picking up the pieces, which must have been a traumatic experience for her every time".

Twelve of these participants (3 from group 1, and 9 from group 2) describe circumstances where at least one, if not both, parents set a pattern of values and behaviour that the participant subsequently reacted against. The family background had become a shaping force that they sought to avoid in their future lives. The reasons were varied. For example, in two cases (6, 11) it reflected discomfort or discord in the home environment. Another (33, quoted earlier) reflected a sense of injustice and a conflict with values that he considered important. Three of the women (16, 17, 20) found themselves either blocked from further education because "education is not for girls" or with limited choices through parental perception of what was an appropriate choice for a woman. These experiences become a source of internal pressure on what to avoid and change in the future.

Twelve of group 2, the group of twenty-two participants, reported no experience of developmental support for their aptitude from either schooling or home life. No participants in group 1 reported this. (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 17, 23, 26, 30, 34, 37.) In contrast with group 1, the participants in group 2 report a much lower level of expressed parental support for education and achievement.

The 'negative' experiences reported appeared to influence the development of creative work differently. There were details in group 1 stories where participants described negative events and continued seemingly 'regardless'. In group 2 participants described themselves as blocked or undermined by their experiences, with greater degrees of uncertainty occurring as a result – reflecting a higher incidence of reported lack of self-confidence.

There was a continuum of support received from parents described by participants:

1. 'Identity' level support: where the parent encouraged the young person to make their choice independent of the parent.
2. 'Practical' support received from the parent in following their choice of skill, e.g. in transport to classes.
3. 'Generalised' support for the principle of education and 'good grades', but not linked to a particular subject area.
4. No described support.

The experience described in number 1 and 2 above parallel the findings of Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993) in their study of talented teenagers (where they found parents had encouraged children to make independent decisions and offered practical support in their pursuit of these interests).

Group 1 participants described support in the first two areas (identity level and practical support). Group 2 participants tended to describe support in the third or fourth areas.

This contrasts with research on exceptional creative individuals and gifted individuals in a variety of domains, which tend to report consistent intellectual stimulation received in the home and elsewhere and a high value placed on learning (Roe 1953; McCurdy 1957; Goertzel and Goertzel 1962; Ochse 1990; Bloom 1985; Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Parents are described as playing a pivotal role in the development of values and interests of their children and providing a focused level of support for their development. There is a paradox in that the individuals in these studies also commonly reported perceiving the parental style as both disciplinarian and tyrannical and experienced a difficult emotional environment (Goertzel and Goertzel 1962; Chambers 1964; Goertzel et al 1978; Mackinnon 1992; Ochse 1990).

In summary, participants in group 1 described a higher level of support, more specific in its nature, being received from parents, compared with group 2. They described more positive and fewer negative experiences, and appeared able in some way to push through the negatives, or to carry on despite them. Therefore, these participants relate more closely in this factor to the experiences of the exceptional creative individual. Equally the strained and non-supportive atmosphere of many of the group 2 homes seems to have adversely affected their self-image and sense of identity. This may be one reason why they took longer to settle on a particular work interest.

The degree of support may have practical consequences in the developmental trajectory of an individual's talent. Unless there is recognition from the 'field', i.e. the parents and/or schooling through which practical and 'gate-keeping' support is received, identification and

development of creative activity (the 'gift' or the talent) may at least be slowed if not blocked.

In the context of normal life span development it is appropriate to question whether the kind of home background difficulties described here are 'abnormal'. Levinson's (1996) study of female development, where he addressed this question directly, suggests that it is not uncommon. Some form of struggle and dysfunction within the home environment was, he believed, common. Therefore reports in this participant group and section are not interpreted as 'abnormal'. Works such as Goertzel and Goertzel's (1962 and 1978) study of the development of eminent individuals indicated that their experience of family life might be more extreme in its content of dysfunction and difficulties in many cases.

5.6 Disability and Illness

Historical research into the exceptional creative individual indicates a high incidence of disability or physical illness being experienced during the years of childhood and adolescence.

Table 5.5: The incidence disability or illness in the participant groups:
(Note: participants may appear in both categories.)

Group 1:	Nos.	%	Participant Numbers:	Group 2:	Nos.	%	Participant Numbers:
Illness	**2**	(11%)	(24, 36.)	Illness	**6**	(27%)	(3, 8, 12, 17, 23, 37.)
Physical disability	**2**	(11%)	(11, 36.)	Physical disability	**2**	(9%)	(12, 17.)

The researcher defined illness as any experience (e.g. broken limbs or rheumatic fever) that affected the participant for a period of at least several weeks, and interrupted or changed their pattern of schooling or education.

The categories of disability and illness are differentiated because the time spans and consequent impact are different, e.g. disability has a longer-term impact, whereas in the case of this study illness appears to have a shorter-term impact. Different forms of disability occurred within the participant group, including sight, limbs and disfigurement. They affect 9 participants out of 40, 22% of the overall group.

What was the impact of these experiences? Participants 11 and 17 each expressed feelings of marginality from their experiences of disability. Participant 11 communicated a sense of 'drivenness' associated with feeling "not-okay", an influence that stayed with him into his midlife decade. He focused on an aptitude for music discovered and developed in childhood. Participant 17 also had similar early experiences, but did not identify an aptitude at that time to develop in later work. She experienced a significant period of searching in early adulthood before relating to a particular form of work.

Participant 12 described periods of enforced inactivity and limited mobility due to hospitalization and operations. He believed this impacted and changed his observation skills – by being inactive he developed skills for observing others which subsequently were used in his adult work.

Participants 12, 17, 23, 36, 37 each described periods of childhood illness of long enough duration to influence education for a period of weeks or months, yet it is not clear from their stories whether any adverse impact occurred.

In some cases these experiences affected subsequent choice of work. Three participants (12, 17, 36) reported experiences severe enough to influence the choice of work direction –

or the direction available to them. There is a higher incidence of childhood illness in group 2. Work on the exceptional creative individual suggest a higher incidence of illness overall, but that was not found in the overall participant group.

There are psychological as well as physical disabilities. Participant 10 described a childhood containing psychological trauma as a result of time spent as a refugee during the Second World War and the subsequent time and education in the aftermath to this conflict. These experiences had shaped her development, limited her education in this life period, her choice of work, and had left her with a sense of vulnerability.

Existing research on the background of the exceptional creative individual indicates a higher incidence of illness and disability than appears in the general population. Authors such as Ochse (1990) and the Goertzels' (1962 and 1978) speculate upon the impact of these experiences. They suggest it may provide an environment of enforced solitude and loneliness that is used as a place of focus and learning of a skill and knowledge by the developing child or adolescent. This is not a pattern identified in this participant group. In general, no clear influencing pattern is found in the stories of this participant group describing illness or physical disability (McCurdy 1957; Roe 1951; Goertzel and Goertzel 1962).

5.7 Bereavement

The literature suggests that the impact of death of one or more parents in childhood can shape the direction and way in which creative individuals explored their aptitude or chosen field of work.

Table 5.6: Bereavement experienced by participants:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Category - Bereavement:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Bereavement (all fathers) in childhood or teens.	**1**	(6%)	**3**	(14%)	(31.) (1, 10, 22.)
Bereavement (all mothers) in early twenties.	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	(8, 9.)
"Loss" of father from home in childhood e.g. during war years, and after.	**3**	(17%)	**1**	(5%)	(13, 15, 18.) (17.)
Adopted.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	(26.)

There was a low level of bereavement experienced in this participant group and lower than that experienced in the general population (Simonton 1987: p141; Ochse 1990: p75). The biographies of the bereaved group show no discernable difference to those of other participants. The four individuals who lost their fathers during war time years do, however, communicate a strength of will and independence in their stories – yet there is no evidence linking that apparent behaviour to this experience. If there is a 'gain' from the experience of bereavement or absence of a parent it is not obvious in this participant group.

Research indicates that it was common for creative individuals to lose a parent, most usually the father, during childhood. While the exact impact of this is not fully understood, the literature review suggests two possible outcomes. The first is that the individual may feel pressed or stressed into mastering an activity and performing exceptional work as a means of establishing a form of control on an otherwise difficult world in which major loss has been experienced. The second suggests a more positive perspective – that the absence of a parent might free the child into making personal choices

without the shaping force of a parent's views (Roe 1953; Eisenstadt 1978; Albert 1980; Simonton 1987; Ochse 1990; Csikszentmihalyi 1996). These effects were not visible in this participant group.

5.8 Schooling and Education

The level of education participants received, and how they perceived and experienced schooling.

In examining schooling and education there are three issues to consider. First, the level of education undertaken by this sample group. Second, what participants perceived of the experiences of education, and what outcomes, if any, this developed as they moved into adult life. Third, the influence of teachers on future direction and activities - which is considered under the following heading of influential adults and role models.

The level of education reached by this participant group:

Table 5.7: Level/limit of education undertaken:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
1. State schooling	**Nil**	(0%)	**6**	(27%)	(1, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17.)
2. Technical education	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	(6, 32.) (4, 12.)
3. Further education	**3**	(17%)	**6**	(27%)	(7, 24, 36.) (1, 8, 20, 22, 26, 30.)
4. University level education	**13**	(72%)	**9**	(41%)	(2, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41.) (14, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 34, 37, 38.)
5. Later life study	**9**	(50%)	**17**	(77%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 24, 29, 30, 40.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 37, 38.)

Notes: Rows 1 – 4 describe the 'upper limit' of formal education undertaken by participants. Row 5 indicates those individuals who returned to some form of education and training at a later point in their life. Schooling is classified as school education offered by the state or obtained privately, after which the individual is free to leave and follow a job or career. Technical education, for example, is an apprenticeship. Further education, for example, is teacher training or training in social work. University education, or equivalent, is studying for a degree or, for example, training as an architect. Examples of later life study include training as a counsellor or psychotherapist, and going part-time or full-time to university for degree-level study.

Reviewing the patterns between the two groups: in group 1, 100% of participants went beyond state school education, in comparison with 73% of group 2. Seventy two percent of group 1 participants went to university in comparison with 41% of group 2. Seventy seven percent of group 2 participants went into late life study after the normal education years, in contrast with 50% of group 1. This indicates that more of the participants in group 1 received more education at higher level, sooner, than those of group 2. More of the participants of group 2 were involved in some form of subsequent 'catching-up' in the amount of later education they received.

Neither pattern is found in work on the exceptional creative individual. Ochse (1990: p85) and Simonton (1987: p147) both describe an inverse relationship (an inverse 'U' shaped curve) between education level and achieved eminence, with a peak occurring prior to the bachelor degree-level of education. Why this should be the case is not fully understood. Ochse reflects Simonton's work in suggesting that: " ... creative achievers tend to discontinue their education when they feel they have learned enough to continue on their own – they may simply become bored with formal instruction, or disenchanted with what formal institutions have to offer. In other words it may not be a case of 'increases in education discourage creativity', but 'creativity discourages increases of formal education" (p87). However, this may vary according to professions - Simonton's (1992) work investigating the career patterns of successful psychologists in the last 100 years contrasts, even contradicts this conclusion and that suggests the need to examine this area in occupational terms. He found that peak performers received a Ph.D. from a prestigious educational institution sooner than their peer group.

We now turn to the experiences and outcomes of schooling among the participant group.

Table 5.8: Experiences of schooling described by participants:

(Note: participants may appear in more than one category.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Experience of schooling:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Positive experiences:					
Opportunity to develop and learn in their area of talent and ability.	**9**	(50%)	**4**	(18%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 39, 41.) (14, 21, 22, 25.)
Their performance was positively influenced by particular teachers (and generally towards specific subjects).	**10**	(56%)	**10**	(45%)	(6, 13, 15, 24, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 25, 27, 34, 37.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Experience of schooling:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Negative experiences:					
Bad teaching, or violent teachers (which generally meant that school experiences were considered 'wasted').	**2**	(11%)	**6**	(27%)	(18, 32.) (1, 3, 4, 10, 17, 30.)
Feelings of being a 'loner', alone or isolated.	**1**	(6%)	**5**	(23%)	(11.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 28.)
Long-term attendance at one or more boarding schools, generally from an early age, e.g. 6 – 9 years old.)	**4**	(22%)	**8**	(37%)	(15, 32, 35, 41.) (1, 4, 20, 23, 26, 28, 30, 37.)

The experiences of the majority of group 1 participants (13 out of 18) are described principally in positive terms. They had found support in school for their preferences and had been given the outlets and support to learn and practice their work. (2, 6, 11, 13, 15,18, 24, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.)

For example: A management consultant and trainer (6), who had previously described how difficult he found the experience of his family, told of how he:

> "... absolutely adored school! I loved it! I have to struggle to think of bad times at school. (...) I just don't remember it being bad". He described many experiences he enjoyed. "I was under a lot of pressure to achieve, but I actually enjoyed it. I scraped my 11+, and went to a technical high school, grammar school level. And that whole experience was great. I loved it. I can almost smell the blackboards, the desks with that certain wax smell".

The female senior manager (7) was unusual in describing school in terms of what *she* wanted from it. Her memories were of:

"Achieving I suppose. Learning. Trying not necessarily to be the best, but the best at what I did. There was always a need to be at the top, or to try and get to the top. And not always achieving it. (And) of trying to pick up new things. I always got a bigger kick at doing something at school that nobody else did. For example, I was the first one to learn Russian. I only did it because nobody else had done it".

A management consultant and trainer, who had described his experiences of a lonely and marginalised home life, went to a school which allowed a different sort of experience, drawing on his musical aptitude.

"I went to an all boys grammar school – it had some very negative, controlling aspects to it, and I am negative about some of the experiences. But it was a very musical school, there was a lot going on. (...) I was in concerts, playing the violin and guitar, you name it, I was doing it. I was in operas, acting in school drama-type productions. Writing a lot of poetry as well". Why did he do it? " ... there was the thing there about performance. There was the thing there about the adrenaline of getting the production, and then performing it".

The second group had more contrasting experiences, positive and negative, of schooling.

<u>Example of the positive experiences found in group 2</u>:

Participant 14 described a happy and supported experience of school life:

"... I went on to (the local) Grammar school, and that was a *wonderful school* basically. But basically the experience across the seven years when I was there, was very happy indeed. Very good Head and the school motto was "Honour before Honours" which is an interesting motto for a grammar school. (...) He ran the

school like he meant it. He was more interested and I actually heard him say that - he considered the job was about being true to 90 kids in a year, and not to the top 15 or 20 who might be the high flyers. He felt that the job was about doing the whole job."

The relationship with the headmaster and the school influenced his choices and actions well into the period of early adulthood.

Example of negative schooling experiences found in group 2:

The experience of the composer (1) had a direct bearing on her ability to develop musical work at that time. She said:

"I had a training in music which was very, very bad. Very, very bad teachers. When I studied music as one of my main subjects I did fairly well. But I came out very badly bruised. In fact damaged by this rotten teaching, by this tyrannical teacher who used to hit me over the hands if I played a wrong note, who was one of the most appalling teachers you could imagine".

The counsellor (3) had been placed in two different schools run by religious orders. Both were abusive in different ways. He described:

"I did well academically at the beginning. I was reading Dickens, in the original unabridged form at the age of 7. I must have had an incredibly advanced reading age, and I was in the top half dozen of the class. (...) But the relationship with the brother, the monk, was abusive, sexually and physically. (*Long silent pause.*) My school work started to suffer, and I reached into the world of books. Read, and read, and read. I wouldn't translate it into anything in an academic field. It was purely escapism. (*Sighs.*) I had read most of the major classics by the time I was 16 or 17".

The management consultant and writer (4) was sent to boarding school at the age of 8 years. It was clearly a traumatic experience, which he took a long time to come to terms with. He said:

> "I was not particularly studious, I was not particularly successful. I always got very upset at the thought of returning to school because I had a loving home – my Mother, in particular found it very hard to say goodbye to me for those months at a time".

In what appeared to be an internal struggle with how he wanted to remember these experiences, he then described liking and enjoying school, being social, when his most enjoyable pursuits were solitary. He then turned back to his original style of description:

> "I should say that these were extremely traditional schools. Caning was rife. Not just by masters, by prefects. And one was caned for spelling mistakes. It was quite a violent school. I got punished, but so did everyone else. (...) It was harsh, but we didn't know that it was any different from any other school".

Twelve of the overall participant group described attendance at boarding school. Eight of this number reported similar negative experiences of the boarding school environment.

The influence of the quantity of education received by exceptional creative individuals is not clear and subject to debate. Within this research group we know that more of those who identify their work or area of interest in childhood and adolescence receive more education than those who do not – and that their experiences of schooling are generally more positive, (i.e. group 1). Thirty four of the overall group of forty participants went on beyond normal school age to further or higher education. It could be argued that this group constituted might be termed a turning-point generation, one where the availability of education was higher than experienced by their parents. Most of this group experienced

opportunities not available to their parents, which took them beyond the experiences and circumstances of their parents. The influence of education on the direction of these individuals will be considered again in a section of the following chapter dealing with the early adult transition.

The experience of the exceptional creative individual in schooling is variable. The general reported experience of the exceptional person in school is one of discomfort or struggle, sometimes described as a sense of being out of place (Goertzel and Goertzel 1962; Goertzel et al 1978; Simonton 1987; Ochse 1990). Teachers can, however, be valued for the leadership, influence, excitement/passion and role modeling they provide for specific subjects (Roe 1953; Goertzel and Goertzel 1962; Simonton 1987; Zuckerman 1977).

5.9 Role Models, Mentors or Influential Adults

The role of influential adults who recognised the 'child' or young person, and the talent they possessed, and/or in some way supported their development.

Table 5.9: Role models and/or influential adults in childhood:

(Note: participants may appear in more than one category.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Role models and/or influential adults:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
A generalised influence: support for the principles of education and development.	**7**	(39%)	**8**	(36%)	(2, 6, 7, 19, 31, 40, 41.) (3, 4, 9, 14, 17, 20, 28, 38.)
A 'specific' influence: support for an ability used or drawn upon in later work, (e.g. skilful teaching which supported the development of the ability.)	**7**	(39%)	**7**	(32%)	(11, 13, 15, 24, 32, 39, 41.) (1, 12, 21, 25, 27, 34, 37.)

Role models and/or influential adults:	'Group 1' Nos	'Group 1' %	'Group 2' Nos	'Group 2' %	Participant Numbers:
An experience of being respected, and listened to as a person, or adult, at an early age.	**5**	(28%)	**3**	(14%)	(2, 7, 36, 39, 40.) (14, 34, 38.)
A 'negative' influence, i.e. an illustration of what the participant does not want to be.	**4**	(22%)	**Nil.**	-	(6, 11, 35, 41.)
No comments/descriptions made in interview.	**1**	(6%)	**7**	(32%)	(29.) (10, 16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 30.)

Fourteen of the eighteen individuals in group 1 with an early identified skill developed in adulthood, and fifteen of group 2 described a positive childhood role model, or influential adult, (i.e. the first two categories in table 5.11 above).

For example: in group 1, the future outdoor pursuits teacher (13) said:

> "My most powerful role model at school was my P.E. teacher. I really admired him. And when I wanted to go to (college) to train as a P.E. teacher, to be like (him), - (he) can do it, so can I".

The future architect (15) described how a city architect gave him support, and lent him books to nurture his growing interest in buildings and architecture.

Influential adults also occur in group 2, the second group – though proportionally to a slightly lesser extent.

The composer (1) talked of a woman encountered in school who modeled both strength of character and organising skills – both subsequently developed and shown in the composer's business and musical work. She said:

> "There was a rather extraordinary woman who came into my life at that point (12 years old). (She was) the wife of the ex-governor of (an African country). She was dedicated to the 'Girl Guide' movement. She sponsored the School Company. I kind of attached myself to her – a remarkable similarity to a number of other quite powerful women I attached myself to during other stages of my life. She was the first one. She and her husband had a huge home with enormous fields where we could have these marvelous overnight camps, and stay away from the horrors of boarding school".

The male disabled youth leader (12) told of another disabled adult:

> "(He was someone) with a severe disability. I think it was seeing him do things, and carry on as if it didn't matter, gave me the drive to imitate him. I could see his disability was far worse than mine, and I felt if I could be half as successful as him I would have achieved what I wanted to achieve. I suppose as far as that is concerned, he was a driver".

A summary of the roles or influences found in these adults is as follows:

Parents:	With a love for words, writing, poetry, music or art.
Teachers:	With a passion and/or excitement for a specific subject.
	Who taught them something difficult and helped the participant learn.
	Who recognised the individuality of the participant – sometimes in contrast to the experience of the parent.

	Who modeled a particular way of living (for girls).
A grandparent:	Who listened to and encouraged the participant.

Simonton (1983b, 1984d, and 1987), Ochse (1990), Csikszentmihalyi (1996) and Gardner (1993) are consistent in recognizing the presence of role models in the childhood of exceptional creative individuals working in a variety of domains. The language used to reflect the impact of these adults is powerful, with descriptions of these individuals "infecting" the younger person with their love of a subject, and the younger person "metabolizing" their attention as a form of encouragement. Simonton (1983b, 1984d, and 1987) argues that their presence is a crucial factor in the development of ability in the younger person.

This tone or level of intensity of a role model or influential adult "infecting" an individual occurs only in group 1 stories, e.g. a parent with a love of words and writing. An alternative form of influence found in this overall sample is that of a "doorway" to a subject – a teacher that supports the participant in learning something they previously found difficult. There were no significant differences detected in the reports of males or females as regards influential adults.

The developmental factors explored above are those commonly identified and examined in research on the exceptional creative individual. Prior to examining how these factors might interact to produce creative work this chapter will examine other categories that emerged in this participant group.

5.10 The Experiences of Female Participants

Table 5.10: The female participants in group 1 and group 2:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
The female participants in each participant group.	**7**	(39%)	**9**	(41%)	(2, 7, 18, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 10, 16, 17, 20, 25, 27, 28, 38.)

(Note: This tabular information will not be presented in subsequent sections discussing the experiences of female participants.)

There are broadly similar numbers of women in both group 1, (7) and group 2, (9). The female participants express two core 'stories' at this time.

The first is 'choice', in that these individuals were being offered an apparently open and supported choice in the work they were interested in and the development of their skills. (2, 7, 18, 25, 27, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41.) Seven out of ten of this group were from group 1. Where parents did not offer 'choice', in some instances it was found (e.g. participant 41) through the influence of teachers. Teachers apparently offered recognition and acceptance of the individual's own drives and wishes in a manner and level of detail that might not have been found in the home.

The other aspect (albeit with only 6 of the 16 female participants) at this time was an assumption of a future in a "female" role, an expectation that women will marry, and that educational and work preparation and experience should be based around that expectation. There was a heavy influence of the father on participants in this group. For example, that the father expected and influenced the daughter to take on education and training that would prepare her for 'female' occupations (e.g. teaching) that would be available to her during married life and child-rearing. In these cases, the influence of another family

member (e.g. participant 20) going to university was significant in breaking a pattern of expectations, and allowed the participant to press for her own aspirations. This pattern may be due to the age of the participants (growing up in the 1950s and 1960s) with parents preparing them for what they saw in their youth in the 1930s and 1940s, (Helson 1999).

In all cases the work orientation of female participants is to 'feminine' occupations as described by Levinson (1996), i.e. social work, teaching, academic, and service to others.

5.11 Observations Drawn from Life Span Developmental Theory

One of the difficulties making an assessment and observation from life span development theories at this life stage (childhood and adolescence) are their relative imprecision. One potential measure, extracted from Erikson's life cycle theory is that of the development of competence and identity, (stages 3 and 4 in the life cycle). Albert (1992a and 1994) argues that the development of identity, work and ability proceed in parallel and come together in late adolescence (e.g. 1994: p304). Arnold (1994: p26) mirrors this in suggesting identity formation "is closely related to the clarification of vocational purpose".

The reports of all group 1 participants, and fifteen out of the twenty two group 2 participants contains an indication of the development of 'competence'. The researcher interprets the identification by the participant of an enduring skill, motivation or influencing experience occurring in group 1 to be an indication of stronger identity formation in that group at this time. The patterns in group 2 of not identifying an enduring area of work and interest in early life are probably indicative of slower identity formation, in Erikson's (1958) terms occurring within this group.

5.12 Developmental Patterns of Creativity

In this section the interaction of factors that support or hinder the development of creative activity will be examined.

The data in this chapter have indicated that the majority of participants (33/40) related to an area of skill, motivation or experience in the childhood and adolescence years. Some maintained that relationship into adulthood, some did not.

From the narrative descriptions of these participants the primary difference between the two participant groups seems to be the level and nature of support received from parents. One of the distinguishing features from group 1 was of a higher level and more detailed support than that described in group 2. In addition, the nature of support received by participants in group 2 was described in a more generalized manner. These findings were also found to be significant in Delcourt (1994: p429) in observing the development of 18 students categorized as "gifted".

Group 1 were more likely to obtain more education in early life than group 2 participants.

The role of early influence and extent of early education are potentially linked. The level of support received could have influenced the level of experience, confidence or decision-making within the young person. This, in turn, influenced the relationship with education, and the level of education that they seek. This, in turn, may have influenced the ability of the young person to relate to a potential work activity that would form the basis of an enduring career.

The biographic work on the exceptional creative individual suggests that the experience of bereavement in childhood may place a developmental pressure on the young person to choose and learn an area of skill or activity. The low level of bereavement experienced in the overall participant group suggests that any such influence is absent in this group.

If this is the manner in which data within these stories may be interpreted, how does this relate to other theories emerging from the lives of the exceptional creative individual?

Theories on the development of the exceptional creative individual in childhood and adolescence provide two models of how these developmental factors might interact to produce a creative individual and creative work. They will be used to explore and contrast the experiences of the research group.

In her review of existing research, Ochse (1990: p160/1) proposes a model of factors forming a developmental pattern for the exceptional creative individual:

(Background factors)

- The acquisition of values related to intellectual achievement (from parents, school, society, history, and/or fictional heroes).

plus

- Precocious development of intellectual ability or a talent (via genetic endowment and intellectual stimulation).

plus

- Stress - caused through such factors as bereavement, physical disability, psychopathology, loneliness, rejection or insecurity.

Combine to create knowledge, skill and working practices

- Leading to persistent independent intellectual ability, and a desire to excel.
- Resulting in a wide-ranging knowledge and skill in a particular domain.

It has to be noted that this is a domain-specific model i.e. relating to the development of a particular discipline of knowledge and skill, and the owning and development of that in childhood and adolescence. Few of this participant group present that model. Therefore it is difficult to match this research group to Ochse's model, but then Ochse's evaluation is based on research that indicates early, focused and prodigious development of talent.

Table 5.11: Presence of overall developmental patterns described by Ochse (1990):

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Presence of overall developmental patterns described by Ochse (1990):	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
The acquisition of values relating to intellectual achievement	**11**	(61%)	**13**	(59%)	(2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 19, 29, 31, 32, 39, 40.) (1, 4, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Development of an intellectual ability or talent. (N.B. no 'precocious' development was found in this participant group.)	**8**	(44%)	**5**	(23%)	(2, 6, 13, 15, 18, 29, 36, 39.) (1, 9, 21, 22, 25.)
Stress/illness e.g. bereavement, physical disability, psychopathology, loneliness, rejection or insecurity.	**7**	(39%)	**9**	(41%)	(11, 18, 31, 32, 35, 36, 40.) (3, 10, 12, 17, 22, 23, 26, 28, 34.)
(Leading to:)					
A persistent independent intellectual activity....	(No clear indications found in interview reports of this group.)				
... and a desire to excel.	**13**	(72%)	**6**	(27%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 31, 35, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 14, 21, 23, 25, 34.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Presence of overall developmental patterns described by Ochse (1990):	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Resulting in a wide-ranging knowledge and skill in a particular domain.	**5**	(28%)	**1**	(5%)	(2, 11, 13, 15, 31.) (1.)

Within this overall participant group there is evidence of high levels of ability being reported (for example, via early reading ages, and examinations being taken and passed for Oxford and Cambridge universities). There were no 'prodigies' reported. In systemic terms what was described is the learning of skill and an orientation to a particular form of work, rather than 'creativity' as such in this period of life.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study of 91 living individuals and Roe's (1953) work recognises this pattern – a prodigious talent may be evident in the young person, or it may not. If it is not, then their descriptions suggest a highly developed sense of curiosity is the alternate or equivalent state which will, at some point, become focused on a particular domain of work. This particular factor was present only in a limited manner, (e.g. group 1 = 6, 7, 13, 15, 19, 31, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41 – 11/18. Group 2 = 1, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 34 – 9/22.)

A second model, implied in the work of Bloom (1985), provides different measures and indicators for the development of creativity and exceptional performance in early life. Although this work does not appear to be intentionally systemic in its descriptions, it mirrors the model described by Csikszentmihalyi (e.g. 1988) and his colleagues (e.g. Gardner 1993, and Feldman et al 1994) and it also embraces a model proposed by Albert (1994) for the development of giftedness.

Table 5.12: The presence of supportive experiences cited by Bloom (1985):

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
The presence of supportive experiences cited by Bloom (1985).	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Parents influence a child via their own interests, exposure to particular experiences, working practices or practical support.	**12**	(67%)	**4**	(18%)	(2, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39, 40.) (1, 21, 22, 25.)
Parents influence a child via their practical support.	**15**	(83%)	**9**	(41%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 35, 36, 39, 40.) (4, 12, 14, 21, 22, 25, 27, 37, 38.)
Parents actively seek teachers of an appropriate level of skill and style to pace their child's development and learning.	***Not reported or described in this sample group.***				

This table illustrates that group 1 participants experienced a far higher level of parental influence and support for their area of interest. Therefore, in this group of "ordinary" creative individuals the failure to either recognise a talent, or support it in childhood or schooling appears potentially to lead to a delay in developing creative activity until later life.

In addition, eight individuals from group 2 had experiences in childhood that are experienced negatively, or deflected the individual from appreciating or understanding the talent they may possess at that time. (1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 30.)

Returning to research question 1 at the conclusion of this review of childhood and adolescence:

(a) What early developmental patterns seem significant in ordinary creative individuals: (b) How are these different from those found in "exceptional" creative

individuals and normal life span development?

1. The analytical categories that emerged from the early biographies of the 'ordinary' creative individual are broadly the same as those of the exceptional creative individual (e.g. Goertzel and Goertzel 1962, Goertzel et al 1978, Csikszentmihalyi 1996).
2. One of the main similarities between the ordinary creative individual and the exceptional creative individual is that for the majority of these research participants a connection emerged during childhood and adolescence with their later creative activity. The difference is that just under half (18/40) built a relationship with that activity that continued directly through to adulthood. The remainder either 'lost' that connection, and/or had to find it later during adulthood. Theories of life span development suggest the established connection with a competence or motivation relates to a firmer development of identity at that time as found in group 1. Delays in establishing this connection would appear to indicate a slower formation of identity in group 2 (or priorities given to other factors than work activity, and not reported in interview).
3. While many of the research group are able individuals they did not describe personal stories that suggest a background of prodigious ability appearing in childhood or adolescence. This is also in contrast to the biographies of the ordinary creative individual, and the exceptional creative individual.
4. The differentiating factor between those that built and maintained a relationship with an activity or work during childhood and those that lost that relationship at that time appears to be the level and nature of support received from parents. The more specific the support received from parents, seemingly the greater the chance of a long term connection to an activity that later becomes the basis for creative work. This parallels the findings of Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993) on complex familes.

5. There is a discernable difference in the level of education obtained in this time period between the group that identified and related to a creative activity and the group that lost that connection, to re-establish it in later years. More of those that established and maintained a connection in these earlier years received more education early in life.
6. The proportion of bereaved in this research group appears quite low (i.e. relative to that in the exceptional creative groups and that expected in the general population) (Eisenstadt 1978). The potential influence of this is unclear.

5.13 Entry into the "Early Adult Transition"

Early adult transition refers to an age period of about 18+ when participants moved into university study, or equivalent. One can examine their clarity of direction at this time.

Table 5.13: Clarity of direction/motivation at approximately 18 years old:

(Note: participants may appear in more than one category.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Clarity of direction:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
A clear choice of further study and/or work made. (In the majority of cases this choice is subject to further evolution, development and/or change.)	**18**	(100%)	**11**	(50%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 12, 14, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 38.)
A study and/or work choice structured by 'tradition', or options considered normal in the context, e.g. "girls move into teaching from this school", or "education is not for girls", or "getting work in this town is a lottery – you can *expect* to be unemployed".	**Nil**	-	**6**	(27%)	(3, 4, 16, 17, 20, 21.)
Participants who are unclear about their choice of direction, and are still 'searching'.	**Nil**	-	**8**	(36%)	(3, 8, 9, 10, 17, 23, 30, 37.)

Twenty nine participants, all those in group 1, and half those in group 2, described a clear choice for future study and/or work. It is interesting to note that a "clear choice" made at this time might be subject to change at a later date. Six participants from group 2 describe a choice explicitly influenced by tradition or context, e.g. "girls move into teaching from this school", or going to work for a specific employer because it was the primary one in the local area – and was subject to change as they become exposed to alternatives.

The participants in group 1 expressed far higher levels of clarity than those in group 2. The position of participants in group 2 ranges from clarity on their sense of direction, to a significant influence imposed by others, and to no sense of direction being experienced.

This thesis now moves to examine the period of Early Adulthood, 18 – 35 years old.

Chapter 6 – Early Adulthood (18 – 35 years old)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider research data on the early adulthood period to the onset of the midlife decade – in age terms from 18 – 35 years old.

The key focus of this chapter is an examination of the following research question:

Research question 2: (a) How do 'ordinary' creative individuals locate and develop a domain of creative activity in early adulthood? (b) How is this different from the practices of 'exceptional' creative individuals and normal life span development?

To achieve this, the chapter will present:

- 6.2 The decade of the twenties:
  - 6.2.1 The early adult transition.
  - 6.2.2 The life structure choices.
  - 6.2.3 The work trajectory (examples of the work experience of participants).
  - 6.2.4 Work patterns viewed through the componential theory of creativity.
- 6.3 The thirties to the start of the midlife decade (30 – 35 years old):
  - 6.3.1 The life structure.
  - 6.3.2 The work trajectory.
  - 6.3.3 Work patterns viewed through a componential theory of creativity.
- 6.4 Other analytical perspectives:
  - 6.4.1 Influential adults.
  - 6.4.2 Experiences of female participants.
  - 6.4.3 Pre-midlife relationships to domain and field.

- 6.5 Research questions and summary of results.

The research question will be explored by (a) the experiences of the participant group, (b) contrasts with the experiences of the exceptional creative individual, and (c) contrasts with life span development theory and (d) contrasting the experiences of particular groups, such as women and the disabled.

6.2 The Twenties

6.2.1 The Early Adult Transition (18 – 22 years old)

According to Levinson the early adult transition marks the move from the world of the "family of origin" into an adult life that reflects more of the individual's own choice and priorities in the social world. It signifies a termination, evolution and/or change in relationships with significant parts of the adolescent world, e.g. school and peer group of the time, and initiates relationships that will take the individual towards "the responsibilities, burdens and satisfactions of early adulthood" (Levinson 1996: p69).

Biographic research on the exceptional creative individual indicates that if a talent or skill has not shown itself in childhood and adolescence it is likely to do so during this period (e.g. Gardner 1993, Roe 1953). The individual's decision on a work course to follow is expected to be made or confirmed at this time. Research reviewed in Chapter 2 implies that the move into a choice of work is 'plain sailing' for the exceptional creative individual. Arnold's (1994) research on gifted individuals suggests that this transition may not always be made smoothly or successfully.

The reports of the participant group in this period (the early adult transition) were primarily structured around the subject of further education and anticipated work, though comments about home and parents were also made. The tone of these comments were often about the wish or need to leave home, poor relations with parents, or the way in which parents had shaped subsequent work steps. Section 5.18 of Chapter 5 reviewed the motivation and clarity of direction of the participant group on entry into university-level education at the age of 18.

This situation changed during the early adult transition (18 – 22 years old). The following table reviews the clarity of participants as they exited this transitionary period.

Table 6.1: Clarity of direction/motivation at approximately 22 years old:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Clarity of direction:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
A clear choice of work made. In some cases this involves further/extended education. (In the majority of cases this choice is subject to further evolution, development and/or change.)	**13** **(-5)**	(72%)	**11** **(+1)**	(50%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 24, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (8, 9, 12, 16, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 34, 38.)
A study and/or work choice structured by 'tradition', or options considered normal in the context, e.g. "girls move into teaching from this school", or "education is not for girls", or "getting work in this town is a lottery – you can *expect* to be unemployed".	**Nil**	-	**4** **(-3)**	(18%)	(3, 4, 12, 14.)
Participants who are or have become unclear about their choice of direction, and are 'searching'.	**4** **(+4)**	(22%)	**6** **(-1)**	(27%)	(2, 7, 29, 33,) (1, 3, 17, 20, 30, 37.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Clarity of direction:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Female participants whose choices have been structured or influenced by marriage or the possibility of it.	**1**	(6%)	**3**	(14%)	(18.) (10, 25, 27.)

(Note: The numbers, in brackets, with a plus or minus figure indicate the change from the entry point to the early adult transition, portrayed in chapter 5.)

What lies behind these figures and the changes in them? Of the 24 participants who made a clear work choice, 10 located a place in which to commence their work – 14 knew what they wished to do and were attempting to locate a place in which to do it. For the 'group 1' participants this formed the basis of incremental moves into other work over time. While the clarity achieved by this group is clear it is less than that reported by exceptional creative individuals in other domains where the work choice had generally been made by this time (e.g. Gardner 1993, Roe 1953).

Four participants in group 1 had lost clarity in their work or career choice by age 22 and found themselves in a state of doubt, or searching for what they wanted to do in the future. In each case they eventually returned to their original choice and/or motivation.

Four female participants became focused on marriage, or a future move into it (10, 18, 25, 27). For the participant in group 1 (18) marriage initiated change in her previously anticipated direction, including having a child and going to live overseas for a period. For the three participants in group 2 marriage represented a move made while unclear and undecided on what other alternatives might have existed for them.

Other characteristics or qualities can be detected in this time period including the relationship with parents. One background factor was present in the descriptions. Gould (1977) and Levinson (1996) each suggest that in this time period, when an individual moves away from their parents, they often internalise their parents' attitudes, values or codes of conduct. Descriptions of internalized parental values and behaviour were clearly present in many reports.

Table 6.2: The impact or contribution of parents at this time in adult life:

Note: Participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Impact/contribution of parents at this time:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Work choice made from a positive and supported place of 'free choice'.	**14**	(78%)	**6**	(27%)	(7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40.) (8, 12, 21, 22, 25, 38.)
Clear/described indications of an 'internalised' parental influence often 'negative' or limiting.	**2**	(11%)	**11**	(50%)	(2, 41.) (3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, 26, 30, 34, 37.)
Decisions taken to move 'away from' the ideas and values of the parents.	**3**	(28%)	**8**	(36%)	(6, 15, 33.) (1, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, 28.)
Unclear or unstated influence of parents at this time.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	(27.)

Generally, group 1 reflects stronger and more explicit support from parents for the choice made by the participant, or, in three cases a clear model of what an individual did not want to be present in their subsequent lives. Group 2 contains more reports of what may be described

as an internalized 'negative' or 'limiting' parent, and high levels of wish to be 'away from' what the parents represented to the individual.

6.2.2 The Life Structure

The life structure reflects what participants accord priority in their early adult life – the parts of themselves they were 'living-out' in this period, (e.g. work roles or family role/relationships?) This section explores the qualities and characteristics of this experience.

Levinson proposed that the most valuable starting point for describing and examining the Life Structure was the choices made by the individual in their life, e.g. work, family, friendships, love, and living location (1978: p43). He proposed that in making a choice, and having a relationship with something, the choice became "a vehicle for living out certain aspects of the self" (p44). Levinson argued that the Life Structure would have 1 – 3 primary components, and that these would change over time. Levinson found that the choices made were tentative or provisional, often due to uncertainty and inexperience, and commonly revised during the twenties (e.g. age 25/6) prior to a more detailed revision in the Age 30 transition.

Biographic material on the exceptional creative individual in science suggests that work is the primary focus in this period, and that such individuals are sometimes 'slow' to move into the social aspects of relationship and family (e.g. Roe 1951a, 1953).

The table below summarises the choices made by this group for the decade of their twenties, and (in a later table) for the thirties for both group 1 and group 2.

Table 6.3: Life structure priorities – decade of the twenties:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Life structure priorities:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Occupation	**15**	(83%)	**18**	(82%)	(6,7,11,13, 15, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 34, 38.)
Job search	**8**	(44%)	**3**	(14%)	(2, 7, 11, 13, 18, 29, 32, 33.) (4, 17, 30.)
Marriage and family	**7**	(39%)	**7**	(32%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 32, 41.) (3, 9, 10, 22, 25, 26, 27.)
Travel	**8**	(44%)	**9**	(41%)	(2, 6, 13, 32, 33, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 37.)
Study and training	**3**	(17%)	**3**	(14%)	(33, 35, 39.) (4, 23, 37.)
"Difference" (A value or criteria used to assess jobs or circumstances in contrast to the family of origin.)	**4**	(22%)	**2**	(9%)	(6, 7, 15, 19.) (1, 9.)
Spare time activities	**3**	(17%)	**3**	(14%)	(18, 24, 36.) (9, 12, 14.)
Self-exploration (includes an exploration of spirituality).	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	(29.) (21.)

Eighteen participants across the two groups (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 28, 31, 34, 37, 39, 40) indicated that the working world was accorded a prime priority in the building of their life structure in their twenties.

In commencing their twenties – fourteen of this group were building a life structure based both on work and married life. (Group 1: 6, 11, 13, 15, 32, 33, 35, 41.) (Group 2: 3, 9, 22, 25, 26, 38.) Four of this group talked as if work and married life were in balance, or of equal priority. (3, 9, 11, 25). The other participants did not communicate this balance or equal priority.

Three (10, 18, 27) were directed primarily towards marriage and family life. During the passage of the decade this also became the focus for participant 25.

Two participants (21, 29) were motivated primarily by a search for and exploration of spirituality. Two participants (23, 35) were engaged in long-term Ph.D.- level study at prestigious universities that would significantly influence their future work direction. Participant 36 was engaged on a path of work and music independently and would eventually combine aspects of these areas together into a single form of work.

There are few differences between group 1 and group 2 in the life structure in this time period. The main difference is that a higher proportion of group 1 are focused on job search. This is not surprising since the majority of participants in group 1 have made a clear choice on what work to become engaged in. It follows that the focus and energy of their efforts are to discover where they can or wish to become engaged in this. More of group 2 participants are still asking both what work to become engaged in, and where. Where they lack clarity some of these participants choose one kind of work as a possible option, with the intention of helping clarify where they may eventually focus their attention.

Given that little research in the area of creativity has examined the experiences of female participants this will be considered separately. Eleven out of sixteen female participants make direct references to their work choices and decisions being influenced by opportunities available to women, or the attitudes of their fathers towards work that was appropriate for a woman to do.

For example (participant 20):

> "... I was geared to "you are going to be married and have a family". So you need to do something so if your husband can't provide for you, it would fit round having children". (Interviewer - So incredibly practical.) "Absolutely! So be a teacher, you have got the school holidays! (Laughs.) Cookery and needlework, you know, if you marry somebody who can look after you, you will have the skills to entertain. And be a homemaker. That was the pressure. The way it went. This is what girls do, you know, your life is mapped out. ... So I don't think I ever really thought about it – at even possibly up to 18 – I think I was just swept along with it. I think probably where I began to say 'hang on a second' probably was 18 and over. When I was at teacher training college. I had actually been with like people up till 18. ... I was mixing with very different people at teacher training college who had come from people who said why don't you take a year off. ... So I was being opened up. So it was at that stage I thought hang on a second. I am here for the practicalities of the rest of my life – what other people are doing is living for the moment! So I think that is where I started to question."

Six female participants (2, 7, 18, 39, 40, 41) made no references to parental influences directing them to 'female' activities. In all cases, however, they moved towards work or

areas of study where openings would be expected for women (e.g. writing, journalism and teaching). Two of this group of seven (18 and 41) are at the older end of the participant age range which places them in a time when these parental and work stereotyping influences could be expected to be both present and significant. They appear to have avoided these influences. In one case (participant 18) said she had no father to model this restriction, and participant (41) said she was significantly influenced by women teachers as role models who communicated that she could and should do what she chose.

Levinson's description of the "dream" is a fundamental part of the early adult transition and early adulthood. It is a formation of a sense of self in the adult world, one that gets tested and developed over time. The descriptions of the dream equate broadly with Erikson's descriptions of 'identity'. The formulation of a dream provides focus and direction – it influences the life structure components to be 'lived out'. The experiences described by group 1 – the early starters – communicate a clearer sense of self in the adult world, connected with occupational choice, and choice of activity, and thereby relate more directly to a "dream" than participants in group 2.

6.2.3 The Work Trajectory

The overview of the life structure provided broad indications of work patterns. Occupational development is examined by looking at the patterns these individuals developed in their work and/or creative activity during this period.

The two groups had differing experiences. For 'group 1', (18 participants) the group where a work area or motivation had been identified and developed in childhood or schooling, this

development was continued through university education, and in the development of a career. Generally, they had a level of clarity on 'what' they wished to do, and indicated that their efforts went into finding 'where' they could or wished to undertake this work.

For example: The outdoor activities teacher (13) made, initially, a 'false start' in the development of his career when entering a particular occupation influenced by his Father. He rapidly made an alternative choice, and applied to a leading college to study the teaching of physical education. He said:

> "I wanted to go to (this particular college) to train to be a P.E. teacher, like Bill, my role model. I heard stories of what a fantastic college life others had, so I applied to go there. They had a ratio of fourteen applicants for every available place, so I was dead chuffed to get offered a place there".

On completing his teaching certificate he decided to travel, and spent two years in Africa and Canada, at first teaching, and then studying further to convert his teaching certificate to a degree. He married in this period. A turning point in work occurred at the end of it when he moved for the first time into teaching outdoor activities[1]:

> "I got a three month seasonal job as an Outward Bound Instructor in the first season of a British Columbian Outward Bound school. I loved it, being out in the mountains with these lads doing outward bound stuff – it was really like *it was it*!"

He returned to Britain, to an unsettled and unhappy period of temporary teaching posts. There was a clear pattern in group 1 of trying to find a work location that matched their skills and aspirations. This participant had focused, in the course of his degree, on leading-edge educational ideas sought a location in which to implement these ideas.

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[1] Outdoor education had been part of his college/university education, he found himself at the "beginning of a wave of interest in outdoor education" in this country.

> "I was driving along a country lane, and I was following an army three ton truck full of lads in the back, singing their heads off. It took me right back to my memories of the cadet force at school. And I made an instant decision (*clicks his fingers*), I thought right, I am going to join the air force. I am going to do a short service commission and do 5 years as a physical education officer. It will be 5 years on the CV, at the same time it is lots more adventure, and going places ... ".

His period in the RAF, the remainder of his twenties, involved two postings to bases undergoing massive organisational and cultural change. His work starts a second 'niche', for him, which continued in later years. He had to initiate programmes not previously developed or used in his context. He described one example:

> "My brief was to write a P.E. programme for the new (degree/graduate) entry scheme. I did it with ease. (...) It was just like common sense. I surprised myself how well I managed it, and how well I involved the staff, and allocated people to jobs. Everybody knew what they were doing. By the end of the year all the entrants had a balanced menu of physical education, including outdoor activities, and all the P.E. staff which I was responsible for saw each student equally, in all sorts of ways."

It was not a smooth path of development for all of group 1. One participant (female), with a family background of law, who had already spent many years in successful study and practice in journalism said:

> "I experienced a loss, a total loss of purposefulness and direction. ... the logical consequence of what I had done, four years of journalism school, and graduating with high honours, became opaque. There was no logical next step for me, within me. (...) I felt like a deeply, deeply lost soul. If it had been the fashion at the time I

would have said that I was cracking up. I didn't know those words. I just knew that any logical next step, none of them drew me".

She initiated periods of travel, tentative moves towards further education, and an assortment of work, none of which gave her the focus, or direction she sought. Having become involved in the feminist movement, she was asked to chair the final session of a major conference. She demonstrated a skill, in part from journalism, in part from many family experiences, which became an integral part of work and appeared in her thirties:

"I was chairing a session where they expected 50 women, and 400 or something turned up, from across the country, and across the political spectrum. I chaired the final session that drew all these disparate elements together, in a way that was just gob-smacking to others, because they never comprehended it was possible. And so it was a signal of the stuff I have come to do later on. Again, it was a skill I didn't perceive and truly own, but other people clearly did".

In group 2, (with 22 participants), the group where individuals were slower to locate a chosen domain of work, there are differing patterns of experience. For example: (1) 50% of the individuals who began a career, made 'step changes' within it as it evolved into a different form; (2) approximately 25% of the individuals entered the working world uncertain of their direction and explored or moved seemingly randomly until they related to and settled in a particular domain; (3) approximately 10% of the individuals developed a creative activity outside the field of conventional employment; and (4) the remaining 15% devoted themselves to family life.

For example: There were 11 participants in this group who entered a field of work, and made 'step changes', progressive changes in work based on opportunities presented to them, or other experiences.

An example of this path is a male (4), originating in the North of England, in a town with two large, traditional employers. He hoped, initially, for a more academically demanding apprenticeship, but was offered a 'craft' (rather than a 'commercial') apprenticeship. He said:

> "(It was) a fairly traditional apprenticeship". He followed this for its full period: "At the end of the apprenticeship, instead of going into the regular tradesman job that people went into, I was invited to move into a drawing office, a design office, which was, if you like, a kind of promotion I guess. (...) I worked there for a number of years, experienced different plants and industrial processes, and designed equipment and pressure vessels, things of that kind. (...) It was industrial, dirty, sometimes dangerous. (...) I became aware of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with that environment, that lifestyle. And wanting something better for myself, something more personal." His brother moved away from home in this time: "And I think that made me realise there were other options, one didn't have to simply remain at home. And shortly after I started to look at job advertisements".

Building on earlier experience of writing technical training material he succeeded in obtaining a London-based post preparing programmed learning material/texts.

> "This was a really big move," both in personal and professional terms, where he commenced an independent lifestyle.

After two years his boss left, and invited him to move also to a major international company.

> "In career terms I went through a glorious period I suppose where people kept tapping me in the shoulder and saying we think it is time you moved on to such-and-such, so I

> didn't have to think about my career. Other people thought about it. And it went very well, initially."

In that period, at the end of his twenties and beyond, he moved through a succession of alternating personnel and training jobs, becoming progressively more senior.

There were also six individuals who entered the working world in varying degrees of uncertainty about their direction and explored or moved until they related to and settled in a particular domain. For some these were happy, or positive experiences, for others they represented an often painful process of self-exploration.

For example: Participant 14 had joined a graduate training scheme for a large organisation and was rotating through various departments.

> "And moving to (the training department) was a highlight, because it was a job that I immediately thought oh this is good, this isn't like working for a living, *this is excellent*. I worked for a (man who) was ex-services, a *wonderful boss*, very developing, he gave you room to do things but he was always there to guide you." (What sort of training work did you do?) "... it was the general training as they called it. Which was supervisory and in those days we had a 'patch'. And mine was (a division based in the North-west of England), which again was a rich experience because there was this whole (free-standing company) up there. So relatively early in (my) career I was talking to all the senior managers and helping them to find their training, I was their training advisor on anything that wasn't technical. That was a good experience. They had a wonderful house in Cheshire, a great Victorian pile was the head office, and that was not exactly like hard work."

Other participants in the sub group proceeded in a similar pattern of moving and changing work, but against a background of difficult experiences in childhood that left them with significant uncertainties in locating a domain of work about which they felt positive.

For example: One participant (3), after a background of major abuse in school and at home, and a pattern of travelling, a marriage, and seemingly random jobs decided:

> "I had to get away from (the northern town). It was always going to be very low-paid employment there. And there was still 30% unemployment. I didn't want my children growing up in an area of 30% unemployment, because I realised how hard I had struggled to get work, and it was almost impossible to get work, it was a pure lottery if you worked or not."

The time of searching for these participants was longer, in comparison with others in their sub group, and they described self-doubts and negative self-perceptions against which they struggled even when locating their eventual domain of work.

Further differences in the pattern of occupational selection will be explored in the following section.

6.2.4 A Componential Theory of Creativity

Domain, motivation and change skills in the activity of participants in this period are examined. These are aspects of creativity brought to the researcher's attention by Amabile's componential model of creativity and adapted from it for the purposes of this thesis.

Amabile (1997: p42-44) proposes the model of creativity in which three factors need to be present for creative work to appear.

1. Domain specific skills (expertise): "... memory for factual knowledge, technical proficiency, and special talents in the target work domain ..."
2. Intrinsic task motivation: a motivation driven by "deep interest and involvement in the work, by curiosity, enjoyment or a personal sense of challenge".
3. Creative thinking skills: " ... a cognitive style favourable to taking new perspectives (...) and a working style conducive to persistent energetic pursuit of one's work. (...) creativity skills can be increased by the learning and practice of techniques to improve cognitive flexibility and intellectual independence."

Amabile argues that for creativity or creative work to occur all these factors have to be present. The level of creativity achieved is partly a function of the level at which these factors are present. If any are absent, Amabile claims, creative work will not occur. In this research factors prompted by Amabile's model will be examined from a longer-term occupational perspective.

Aspects of two of Amabile's factors - domain expertise and intrinsic motivation are examined below, together with a consideration of the role of skills associated with achieving change in the workplace.

This data is presented from the status of participants in the second half of the twenties – a period representing the closing of the 'entry life structure for early adulthood' within Levinson's theories.

Table 6.4: Domain, motivation and change-orientation during the late twenties:

Participants may appear in more than one category (e.g. under motivation).

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
"Domain specific skills"					
Participants who have located and are working in their domain of creative activity. (i.e. "The" domain.)	**15**	(83%)	**6**	(27%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (4, 8, 12, 14, 22, 23.)
Participants who have located 'a' domain of work and have yet to make a step or change into their eventual domain of creative activity.	**3**	(17%)	**11**	(50%)	(7, 18, 24.) (1, 3, 16, 20, 21, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Participants who have not yet located a domain of activity.	**Nil**	-	**5**	(23%)	(9, 10, 17, 25, 27.)
Nature of Motivation					
Intrinsic motivation for the chosen area of creative work.	**13**	(72%)	**3**	(14%)	(6, 13, 15, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41.) (8, 22, 28.)
Intrinsic motivation for another area of activity, or aspect of work.	**3**	(17%)	**7**	(32%)	(7, 18, 40.) (1, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30, 34, 38.)
Uncertain or unclear motivation.	**2**	(11%)	**5**	(23%)	(2, 11.) (10, 17, 25, 27, 37.)
Extrinsic motivation: e.g. to move away from home, poverty, to make enough money to keep a family, to travel, to get promoted.	**2**	(11%)	**10**	(45%)	(6, 32.) (3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 20, 23, 26, 28.)
"Change Skills"					
Individuals who are demonstrating the introduction of novelty, newness and appropriate contributions in their setting.	**10**	(56%)	**5**	(23%)	(6, 13, 15, 19, 24, 31, 32, 36, 39, 41.) (1, 8, 22, 23, 30.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Individuals who are working in settings where 'change' is considered 'normal', and/or where the skills of introducing change, variation or difference are taught and used.	**16**	(89%)	**11**	(50%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28.)

Domain-specific skills: The two groups show distinctly different patterns in table 6.5. By their late twenties significantly more of group 1 participants had located their domain of eventual creative work (83% in contrast with 27% of group 2 participants). Over half of group 2 participants had either not located the domain of their eventual creative activity, or were working in a domain from which they would/might make a 'step change' to it. This means that the pattern in group 1 is of having achieved a focus of work faster and participants were better placed to concentrate on the development and mastery of their domain-relevant skills. It takes time to learn domain-specific skills. Therefore those who have located and are learning their domain relevant skills earlier are more likely to be further towards achieving domain mastery and a capacity for introducing change creatively in that area (Gardner 1993, Simonton 1994, Feldman 1999).

Motivational focus: This pattern also holds in the area of motivation. Seventy two percent of group 1 described an intrinsic motivation for their area of work, in contrast to 14 per cent of group 2. The majority pattern within group 2 during the late twenties was a motivation to pursue another area of work, unclear motivation, or extrinsic motivation focused on the external aspects of their work, rather than the internal pleasure or gain from doing it. Amabile's (1996) theories suggest that this work focus in group 2 was likely to lead to a lower

standard of eventual work (i.e. either less creative, or not creative), or a focus on other aspects than the work itself.

Change skills: This data looks at two possible perspectives on the skills for creative work appearing at this time. The stories of participants indicated 56 percent of group 1 and 22 percent of group 2 were already demonstrating the skills of introducing new, novel and appropriate ideas and work in their work context. However it was also clear from participants' stories that the majority of group 1 participants and half of group 2 participants' were working in contexts where the introduction of new and novel work was expected, and/or the skills for achieving such change were taught as part of the skills for working in that context. It seems that a large percentage of this overall participant group was working in locations that were open to or actually nurtured aspects of creative work, i.e. the production and introduction of new, novel and appropriate changes into their context. (For example: a large bankrupt company in the process of an aggressive regime to 'turn-round' its work processes and performance; a company manufacturing broadcasting equipment in a fast-moving and fast-changing industry.) In some of these settings the process of making and introducing change was developed and taught.

We now turn to the life span development perspectives of Erikson and Levinson. Erikson's descriptions of the 6th stage of adult development (intimacy vs. isolation) cover the decades of the twenties and thirties. His descriptions are phrased in general terms, but do not imply struggles in the formation of a path of work. For Levinson, the development of the individual's life structure is progressive and may involve struggles, uncertainty or iterative changes. The close of the decade of the twenties at the end of the entry life structure for early

adulthood and the 'age 30 transition' is the first time in which the individual attempts a major review progress to-date in comparison with his or her expectations and aspirations. We can examine how these participants are progressing in this respect.

Seventeen out of eighteen participants in group 1 (94%) had established a stable life structure focused on their area of work – and eventual creative activity. No participants in group 1 seem to have 'flaws' in the life structures that precipitated change in Levinson's age 30 transition.

Eighteen out of twenty two participants in group 2 have stable life structures (82%). Yet only four of these (18%) relate directly to the area of work in which the individuals will subsequently establish a reputation for creativity. Three women focus exclusively on family, children and home. There is a pattern in group 2 both of searching and making step-changes to areas and types of work these participants prefer.

6.3 The Thirties, to the Start of the Midlife Decade (30 - 35 years old)

6.3.1 The Life Structure

This time period includes the Levinsonian age 30 transition and the culminating life structure for early adulthood.

Within Levinson's conception of the life course the Entry Life Structure extends from 22 to approximately 30 years old. The tasks of the Age 30 Transition are "to explore new possibilities in the self and in the world, to become more individuated" and to move towards a "culminating life structure" for this period of Early Adulthood. Levinson (1978 and 1996)

and Gould (1977) both acknowledged that the life structure developed in early adulthood would be flawed given that it would have been formed out of provisional choices, and inexperience. This period represents a time to review and adjust the choices and structures developed to shape the individual's adult life in this time (Levinson 1996: p117).

How does the life structure – the top two or three priorities - change for this group in this period of the thirties? The table, below, summarizes these factors:

Table 6.5: Life structure priorities – age 30 - 35:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Life structure priorities:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Occupation	**18**	(100%) (+17%)	**19**	(86%) (+4%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Job search	**1**	(6%) (-33%)	**1**	(5%) (-9%)	(2.) (17.)
Marriage and family	**11**	(61%) (+22%)	**16**	(73%) (+41%)	(6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 29, 32, 35, 36, 41.) (3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37, 38.)
Travel	**3**	(17%) (-27%)	**3**	(14%) (-27%)	(13, 32, 33.) (1, 16, 21.)
Study and training	**1**	(6%) (-11%)	**2**	(9%) (-6%)	(35.) (3, 4.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
Life structure priorities:	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
"Difference" (A value or criterion used to assess jobs or circumstances in contrast to the family of origin.)	**1**	(6%) (-16%)	**0**	(-9%)	(7.)
Spare time activities	**2**	(11%) (-6%)	**6**	(27%) (+13%)	(24, 36.) (4, 9, 12, 14, 34, 37.)
Self-exploration (includes an exploration of spirituality).	**4**	(22%) (+16%)	**6**	(27%) (+22%)	(2, 6, 11, 15.) (1, 10, 25, 27, 30, 37.)

What trends emerge when the life structure of the 20s' and 30s' are contrasted? (1) There was an increase in both groups towards a focus on work and family. For group 1 the focus on work now applied to 100% - for group 2 it was 86%, (lower as a result of the focus of some participants on raising families). (2) There was a decrease in the activity focused on travel and the search for an appropriate job or area of work – an indication that periods of uncertainty seem to have been resolved and a more settled period had emerged. (3) In group 2 there was an increased focus on spare time activities, which for these participants represented an opportunity for creative activity to take place in these areas, (e.g. participant 14 learning to write poetry.)

6.3.2 Work Trajectory and Experiences

We now turn our attention to other background factors that occur within work experience in this time.

Table 6.6: Summary of participants work trajectory at this time:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Working in an organisational context. (Note: All except four participants are working in an *organisational context at this time.*)	**18**	(100%)	**18**	(82%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Experiencing success and/or recognition in this context, e.g. promotions; for novel work; being allocated major clients; being given major and 'unknown' pieces of work to accomplish.	**17**	(94%)	**10**	(45%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34.)
This period is a prelude to difficulties being experienced – externally, in the context, or internally, in the individual's feelings about their work.	**7**	(39%)	**10**	(45%)	(7, 11, 13, 15, 24, 29, 33.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 20, 21, 28, 37.)
Participants who are not in an organisational context. (Three are married – one is self-employed.)	**Nil**	-	**4**	(18%)	10, 21, 25, 27.

The three occupational groups participants displayed or occupied in later life (e.g. organisational, self-employed, and working 1:1) did not hold at this earlier time in life. One hundred percent of group 1 participants, and eighty two percent of group 2 participants worked in conventional organisational contexts at this time. Ninety four percent of group 1 participants experienced some form of success or recognition during this time period – in comparison with forty five percent of group 2 participants.

Approximately equal proportions of participants faced impending difficulties in their work or personal environments. (Six of this group became dissatisfied with the work environment,

what it demanded of them, and what it allowed them to contribute. They sought a change of environment both in work style and content. Beyond this, the researcher cannot detect further patterns in the pending difficulties.)

Given that one of the distinguishing factors of group 2 is not having related quickly or directly with their domain of eventual creative activity, it is relevant to consider their patterns of work and changes in work. There are differing patterns of experience, yet the underlying patterns remain unchanged from the twenties. For example: (1) 50% of the individuals who began a career, made 'step changes' within it as it evolved into a different form; (2) approximately 25% of the individuals entered the working world uncertain of their direction and explored or moved seemingly randomly until they related to and settled in a particular domain; (3) approximately 10% of the individuals developed a creative activity outside the field of conventional employment; and (4) the remaining 15% devoted themselves to family life.

In summary, this reports no changes occurring in the work patterns of this sub-group at this time. Half of group 2 participants, who start in one form of work and incrementally change the focus of their work, all do so because of intrinsic motivation. Even if they were uncertain about the long-term or future work, they had chosen work at that time that interested them and engaged their talents. They developed and changed their expertise from this starting point. A quarter of the group 2 participants who moved into work uncertain of their future direction did so from very differing motivations – usually 'extrinsic' – and five out of six of them report unhappy experiences as this is occurred.

Turning back to the overall group we can examine some of their experiences in this time period. Contrasting the experience of group 1 and group 2 participants:

For example: In group 1, the architect (in his early thirties), sold his home, and took his family to America for a year, spending part of that time staying on a farm community. He described how:

> "... they had a Quaker background, and were living on the basis of consensus, every major, and sometimes quite minor decisions were made in meetings using consensus principles. (...) we met them quite by chance. We stayed there for about two months, and I started looking at planning communities, that is to say how, or what, is the principle of planning an intentional community. What are the intentions, what are the aspirations, how do you create if you like a support structure, and a series of buildings and infrastructures for that, without fixing it rigidly, so it doesn't move anywhere."

He returned to the UK intending to put this experience and these ideas to immediate use in a planned project. This project, which he believed was confirmed, failed to materialize. These ideas, however, turn out to be a 'seed' for work commenced a decade later.

> "So I cast around for a job here, and soon got working with a large and growing architectural practice in London, and quite quickly worked my way up through the ranks, to a sort of designate partner. We were doing architecture with a very small 'a'. Architecture with a big 'A' was quite rare in this country, and that is what I call architecture which is built with feelings of love, and generosity, it is built with the intention to help people enjoy and get fulfillment by using the spaces that you create".

Architecture with a big 'A' had, at least in part, been an element of his work during his twenties.

> "Architecture with a small 'a' is actually just another way of making money, it was a game I played, and for a while I enjoyed playing. (...) It was a big practice, one of

> the most successful in Europe in terms of building (speculative office and shop space). I had about 25 people working for me, I was personally responsible for something like, in those days, £800 - £900m worth of business."

This participant eventually broke from this pattern of work and moved to smaller-scale, more sensitive projects. The circumstances of this will be described in the next chapter.

In group 2, participant 14 described a contrasting experience that illustrated a difficulty of feeling blocked and unsure of direction:

> "(During my twenties) I made my steps up the ladder, and got good guidance as to when to move – I wanted to be senior management by the time I was 30, and I made it when I was 29. (A significant achievement in that organisation.) I thought "oh great!", and for the next couple of years I thought "fine", and then suddenly I got this sense of not quite knowing what I had to do from there. It seemed like "oh, now what?". And it was in this context that I began to question whether I wanted to be an airline man for life. It seemed to me that there were decisions to be made about a possible career change. (...) This milestone coincided with me getting a job with the man who was to turn out to be my worst-ever boss – I don't think he did anything for his staff to speak of except destroy their confidence. (...) This was not a good mental frame. (...) So in this background I decided to (leave). I didn't have a clue what I was going to do, and I convinced myself that it might give me a year to try and be a professional writer – an interest I had been developing since my early thirties."

The structuring of these lives reflects the actions, change and growth in adulthood described by Levinson's (1978 and 1996) theories (e.g. formation of the life structure and adjustments to it made in transitionary periods). The two groups, the early starters and the later starters, each

displayed differing work and motivation patterns in the decade of the twenties (described in section 6.2.4) dealing with the componential theory of creativity. The shifts that occurred in the early thirties will now be examined.

6.3.3 A Componential Theory of Creativity

We now turn to the factors prompted by Amabile's Componential Model of Creativity to compare the position of participants in their late twenties to their mid-thirties, with changes from the position in the twenties indicated in brackets:

Table 6.7: Domain, motivation and change-orientation during the early thirties (contrasted with table 6.4):

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
"Domain specific skills"					
Participants who have located and are working in their domain of creative activity, (i.e. "the" domain.)	**16** **(+1)**	(89%)	**14** **(+8)**	(64%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Participants who have located 'a' domain of work and have yet to make a step or change into their eventual domain of creative activity.	**2** **(-1)**	(11%)	**7** **(-4)**	(32%)	(18, 24.) 1, 3, 17, 21, 25, 26, 28.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Participants who are still searching for a domain of activity.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	(27.)
Nature of Motivation					
Intrinsic motivation for the chosen area of creative work.	**15** **(+2)**	(83%)	**9** **(+6)**	(41%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (3, 8, 12, 21, 22, 25, 28, 30, 38.)
Intrinsic motivation for another area of activity, or aspect of work.	**3** **n/c**	(17%)	**11** **(+5)**	(50%)	(2, 24, 35.) (1, 4, 9, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 26, 34, 37.)
Uncertain or unclear motivation.	**1** **(- 1)**	(5%)	**2** **(-3)**	(9%)	(7.) (16, 27.)
Extrinsic motivation: e.g. to move away from home, poverty, to make enough money to keep a family, to travel, to get promoted.	**2** **n/c**	(11%)	**1** **(-9)**	(5%)	(18, 32.) (25.)
Other motivation, (for example coping with or managing illness).	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	(16.)
"Change Skills"					
Individuals who are demonstrating the introduction of novelty, newness and appropriate contributions in their setting.	**16** **(+6)**	(89%)	**15** **(+9)**	(68%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 30, 37, 38.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Individuals who are working in settings where 'change' is considered 'normal', and/or where the skills of introducing change, variation or difference is taught.	**17** (+1)	(94%)	**17** (+6)	(77%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)

(Note: The numbers, in brackets, with a plus or minus figure indicate the change from the figures contained in table 6.4, examining these factors in the decade of the twenties.)

There was an increase in the percentage of both groups working in the domain of their creative work, and a consequent decrease in the figures appearing in the other categories.

In addition, there was also an increase in the number of participants reporting intrinsic motivation for their work – yet the percentage within group 1 is still considerably higher than in group 2 (78% in comparison to 41%). In group 2 there was also an increase in the numbers indicating a motivation for another activity (50%). This involved an expanded or changed focus of interest. There is a decrease in the numbers reporting an unclear or extrinsic motivation in group 2. Combined, these suggest more of the group 2 participants had found a domain of activity and intrinsic motivation albeit later than the pattern demonstrated in group 1.

There was also an increase in both groups of individuals demonstrating creativity skills in their context – through the percentages are still higher in group 1 than in group 2. The number of individuals working in settings where change is normal, and the skills for introducing change

are taught, also increases in both groups. Again the percentages are higher in group 1 than in group 2.

6.4 Other Analytical Perspectives

6.4.1 The Contribution of Influential Adults in Early Adulthood:

Literature on the lives of exceptional creative individuals in various domains indicates the importance of the influential adult (e.g. Zuckerman 1977, Simonton 1983b, 1984d). The influential adult can take on many roles and can provide a range of contributions, e.g. on the content of work undertaken, working practices, and standards to be achieved.

Influential adults also appear to play a role at this time for both groups.

Table 6.8: The contribution of role models and influential adults in early adulthood:
Participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Role models: Individuals who demonstrate work skills and working practices aspired to by participants.	**10**	(56%)	**6**	(27%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39.) (1, 12, 20, 23, 27, 30.)
Mentors: The individual receives 'recognition' from another person which either offers them further work opportunity, or prompts them into a new understanding of their capability.	**9**	(50%)	**10**	(45%)	(2, 7, 11, 13, 19, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 8, 16, 17, 25, 27, 28, 30, 34.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
'Teachers': Contact with trainers, teachers or professional 'role models': The individual is in contact with an individual who either teaches them a new skill, or challenges and changes their way of thinking about work.	**10**	(56%)	**6**	(27%)	(6, 11, 15, 18, 20, 29, 32, 36, 39, 41.) (3, 12, 14, 20, 21, 23.)
Authors: Writers who have influenced the participant via books etc.	**1**	(6%)	**3**	(14%)	(35.) (27, 37, 38.)
Summary: Participants reporting some form of experience of an influential adult in this time period.	**16**	(89%)	**17**	(77%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)

The following observations are added to illustrate stories behind the above numbers. A high percentage of the sample reported being influenced by another adult. The percentage was higher in group 1 and more of the participants in this sub-group had more of these experiences, i.e. they reported experiences in more than one of the above categories.

For group 1 participants the reports suggest an opening-up of perceptions about what is entailed in their work domain, or is possible to achieve in work. (6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40; 14 out of 16 reporting participants.)

Group 2 participants described contributions from the influential adult that were more often focused on an understanding of who they were, or changed understanding of who they may be as individuals, resulting in a fundamental change in their self-understanding. (1, 2, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 30, 37; 13 out of 17 reporting participants.)

The group 1 pattern is similar to that found with the exceptional creative individual – in terms of their demonstration of working skills and the working practices aspired to by the individual. Both groups report comparable levels of experience of a mentor – the person who recognises and supports development in the younger person.

6.4.2 The Experiences of Female Participants

Three patterns emerge from the stories of women in the participant group in this era of adulthood. First, there are three "home oriented" women who marry and devote this period primarily to the home and child-rearing over-and-above other alternatives. (All are from 'group 2': 10, 25, 27). It was a choice made in the absence of other options being understood or presenting themselves at that time. All three knew that they wanted to be engaged in other work, and were capable of it, but were unclear during this period what to do about achieving that other work. All were seemingly happy in the role of wife and mother, yet there was also clearly a reported implication of an "unlived" element to their lives that they all knew was there. For all three there was an increasing sense in this period of facing this question and moving gradually towards activity in the world of work away from the home.

Second are the six women who were involved in a relationship (that led in two cases to children), but were also working. (2, 18, 20, 36, 38, 41.) In each case, the story was told with a clear assumption that there was never any other thought of not working despite the relationship or the presence of children. For all but one of these participants (41), there was a lack of clarity at the time on where they would wish to work, or place their efforts. In the case of participant 41, she married while doing ground-breaking Ph.D. research in science,

traveled and worked extensively overseas with her husband at a time when that was uncommon, and returned to make a home and raise children in the UK. She worked consistently during the early adulthood period, sharing this time with child-rearing work. In all cases it was on a voluntary basis, but increasingly involved pioneering work, e.g. into establishing hospices.

Third were the seven women whose main focus during this period was work. (1, 7, 16, 17, 28, 39, 40.) The motivations of this group differed. Four (1, 7, 28, 39) moved into work in organisational settings, where the presence of women was accepted, albeit unusual. In each case it presented them with opportunities for work and development that they might not have had as women in other organisations at that time/in that era. Two (1, 7) suggested they were in that particular organisational context to make use of their energy and ability. They had made active choices to be professionally engaged and 'stretched' as women and to get these opportunities even though their actual skills and interests might have taken them elsewhere. Two (28, 39) were in organisations that matched their skills and aspirations and they proceeded to work and develop in these contexts.

Four of this overall group (16, 17, 20, 40) worked in settings where the presence of women was 'normal' – 'feminine' occupations as defined by Levinson (1996), e.g. teaching or administrative work. One (40) gained promotion and responsibility rapidly. Three (16, 17, 20) moved hesitantly, carrying with them difficult experiences from adolescence and the early adult transition that are centred on their fathers' attitude to what was, or was not acceptable for them as a woman to do. (In all cases of this sample, however, the work orientation was to 'feminine' occupations as described by Levinson 1996, i.e. social work, teaching, academic, and service to others.)

Six of the eight individuals in the 56 – 60 years old age range are female. The patterns of descriptions provided by them vary. The older age group exited this phase of adulthood in approximately 1975, the younger in 1990. The older age group experienced the large-scale social changes of the 1960s' and 1970s' as they moved into adulthood. The younger age group experienced adulthood already shaped by these changes. Yet females at *both* ends of this range described restrictions to their options for choice and being faced with choices based on stereotyped 'female' choices. Equally, females at both ends of the age ranges described how they broke out of stereotyped choices.

In summary (1) all of this female group maintained a focus on the working world outside the home at some point. None expected to be or wished to remain as a 'homemaker' alone. (2) *Feminine occupations (as defined by Levinson 1996) predominate in this group even after the* feminism of the 1970s' to 1990s'. (3) All described a world apparently framed by feminine stereotypes and occupations.

6.4.3 Pre-Midlife Relationship to 'Domain' and 'Field'

This section looks at the apparent patterns of relationship and movement between a domain of work, and the field/s in which it is undertaken during this period.

The use of 'domain' and 'field' is taken from Csikszentmihalyi's "systems" model (e.g. 1988 and 1996), and was covered in the literature review section 2.2.4, which examined the social context of creativity.

The 'domain' is the discipline or work area an individual seeks to learn and to which he or she will subsequently contribute. The 'field' is the social institution or context in which the individual works, and which contains the 'judges' who directly or indirectly assess the value of the individual's contribution in that context. For individuals to become 'expert' in a domain of knowledge a choice will need to be made and a focused period of learning will need to take place. It is common in biographies of creative people to find concentration on a single domain and field. For an individual to receive recognition from a 'field' time will be needed for the work to be noticed, acknowledged and recognised.

Table 6.9 summarizes the relationship of this sample to their 'domains' and 'fields' of work:

Table 6.9: Patterns of movement in 'domains' and 'fields' of work:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Participant Numbers:
Domain:					
Participants who have chosen a domain of work and entered into a structured or organised framework of learning the associated knowledge and skills.	**16**	(89%)	**17**	(77%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Working in a single domain.	**10**	(56%)	**9**	(41%)	(2, 13, 15, 19, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 40.) (1, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 23, 28, 30.)
Working in two domains. (E.g. teaching, then into the priesthood. A social worker, and then a singer. A teacher/academic, to an artist.)	**6**	(33%)	**9**	(41%)	(11, 18, 24, 29, 36, 41.) (3, 14, 16, 20, 21, 26, 34, 37, 38.)
Working in three domains. (E.g. electronic engineer to salesman, to sales manager/managing director.)	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	(6, 7.) (4, 22.)
Field:					
Working in a single field.	**2**	(11%)	**7**	(32%)	(32, 35.) (1, 9, 10, 12, 22, 30, 34.)
Working in two or more fields. (I.e. the participants have moved into and out of one or more 'fields', localised contexts in which they work and may/may not be recognised for this work.)	**16**	(89%)	**13**	(59%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (3, 4, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 26, 28, 37, 38.)
Focus on marriage and family alone during this time period.	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	(25, 27.)

One of the anticipated consequences of working in two or more domains and fields is that participants might have been distracted, or slowed down from being an expert or master in a domain, and receiving recognition from the 'judges' in a particular field.

For some, multiple domains may have helped creativity. In group 1 participants were working in two or more domains and in each case these changes appear to 'feed' the eventual creative work. For example, participant 36 became an acknowledged singer and developer of the discipline of voice teaching. One of her primary motivations in singing, and choosing material to sing is that it illustrated the nature of human experience and the "human condition". She found that her study and experience in social work also shaped and developed her understanding in these areas. This raises a question of whether the idea of a domain of work as a single area of focus is limited, or too constraining. Though the idea of work in a single domain pervades many studies of exceptional creative individuals in this study of the locally creative, work in several different domains seems to combine to shape activity in the area of creative endeavour.

For others, involvement in multiple domains may reflect a search for fulfillment. The changes of domains made by group 2 participants were mainly made against a background of 'searching' for a happier or more fulfilling work context.

Shifting between 'fields' also had potentially positive effects. Participants in group 1 who worked in two or more 'fields' reported reasons for the changes associated with gaining experience that supported their intrinsic motivation for the work they had chosen to do. In contrast, participants in group 2 who worked in two or more 'fields' reported reasons based on

their changing their minds about career course, or for extrinsic reasons like promotion or career status.

6.5 Research Questions and Summary of Results

The key focus of this chapter has been an examination of the following research area:

Research question 2: (a) How do 'ordinary' creative individuals locate and develop a domain of creative activity in early adulthood? (b) How are these different from the practices of 'exceptional' creative individuals and normal life span development?

We look first at the experiences of the 'ordinary' creative individual in this sample:

The choice of work:

The majority of participants in group 1 had made a choice on what work to become engaged in by the end of the Early Adult Transition, university-level education. The focus, the energy of their efforts was to discover where they could or wished to become engaged in this work. This took time, and initial choices were not always successful. These stories reflect Levinson's findings on the Early Adult life structure – that choices are tentatively made, and commonly with difficulty. Their narratives suggested a higher attention to job search within this period, which possibly indicates either their concern or their intention to find the work location of their choosing. Even with this choice made, this sample of locally creative people took more time to find the 'right' location than the exceptional creative individual in a variety of work domains reported by (Gardner 1993, Csikszentmihalyi 1996).

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In group 2 participants were generally still asking both what work to become engaged in, and where. Where they lacked clarity, some participants chose work as a possible option with the intention of using the experience to clarify where they may eventually focus their attention. Levinson defines a period of life with structural uncertainty as a 'transition', but commonly of relatively short duration (e.g. 4 – 5 years). These results suggest that many group 2 participants remained in a transitionary state in early adulthood longer than Levinson would have predicted. This extended period of uncertainty has consequences in terms of a delayed career start-date, and delayed opportunity to concentrate in learning the knowledge and skills of a domain.

The development of domain skills, motivation and change skills:

Drawing on the framework suggested by Amabile's componential model of creativity, the two groups show a distinctly different pattern of work experience and motivation.

Locating their domain: By the end of their twenties significantly more of group 1 participants had located their domain of eventual creative work (83% in contrast with 27% of group 2 participants). Over half of group 2 participants had either not located the domain of their eventual creative activity, or were working in a domain from which they would make a 'step change'. This means that the pattern in group 1 was of having achieved a focus of work faster and an ability to concentrate on their development and mastery of their domain-relevant skills. Therefore those who had located and were learning their domain relevant skills were likely to be further towards achieving domain mastery and/or creativity skills.

Finding motivation: A similar pattern also holds in the area of motivation. Two thirds of group 1 described an intrinsic motivation for their area of work in early adulthood, in contrast

to 14 per cent of group 2. The majority pattern within group 2 at this time was a motivation for another area of work, unclear motivation, or extrinsic motivation focused on the external aspects of the work, rather than the internal pleasure or gain from doing it. Amabile's theories predict that this pattern in group 2 could lead to a lower standard of eventual work or it being less creative, or a focus on other aspects than the work itself.

Developing skills associated with change: This data looks at two possible perspectives on the skills for creative work appearing at this time. The stories of participants indicate 56 percent of group 1 and 27 percent of group 2 were already demonstrating the skills of introducing new, novel and appropriate ideas and work in their context. However it was also clear from the participants' stories that the majority of group 1 participants and half of group 2 participants were working in contexts where the introduction of new and novel work was expected, and/or the skills for achieving such change were taught as part of the skills for working in that context. A large proportion of this overall participant group was working in locations that were open to or actually nurtured aspects of creative work, i.e. the production and introduction of new, novel and appropriate changes in their context. It is not clear the extent to which this facilitated their creative endeavour, yet it must be assumed to have played a supportive part.

The domain of creative work: Prior to the midlife decade (35 years old) the patterns in biographies change further. There was an increase in the percentages in both groups of those in the domain of their creative work, and a consequent decrease in the figures appearing in the other categories.

In this period of adulthood there was an increase in the number of participants who reported intrinsic motivation for their work – yet the number within group 1 was still higher than in group 2 (78% in comparison to 41%). There was also an increase in the numbers indicating a motivation for another activity in group 2 (50%). There was a decrease in the numbers reporting an unclear or extrinsic motivation in group 2. Combined, these represent a clear indication within group 2 of having found a domain of activity and intrinsic motivation albeit later than the pattern demonstrated in group 1.

There was also an increase, in both story groups, of individuals who demonstrated change skills in their work context (yet the numbers are higher in group 1 than in group 2). Individuals working in settings where change was normal, and the skills for introducing change are taught also increased in both groups. Again these numbers are higher in group 1 than in group 2. It is possible that this environmental factor facilitated the development of skill and the appearance of associated creative influencing from these participants.

Presence and contribution of influential Adults:

More of participants in group 1 report experiences of influential adults and have more of these experiences, i.e. they report experiences in more than one of the categories.

For group 1 participants the core pattern within reported experience was an opening-up of perceptions of what is contained in work, or is possible in work.

Group 2 participants described contributions focused on an understanding, or changed understanding of who they may be as individuals, a fundamental change in their self-understanding.

This difference in focus may be expected. For example, where group 1 participants have found their domain of work, their focus is on what they may need to develop that activity. Group 2 participants, with a longer period of 'searching' are still resolving questions about who they are as individuals, or where they wish to attach their work efforts.

Patterns of change between domain and field:

In cases where group 1 participants changed to work in two or more domains, at this time the additional areas 'feed' or contributed to the eventual creative work. However, the changes of domain made by group 2 participants all seemed to be based on some form of uncertainty around work or work choice.

Participants in group 1 who opted to work in two or more 'fields' (in the sense of different organisational environments) all reported reasons for the decision associated with gaining experience. Participants in group 2 who worked in two or more 'fields' all reported reasons based on their changing their minds about career course, or for extrinsic reasons like promotion or career status.

Examined overall in this period of early adulthood there are strong indications that group 1 and group 2 participants represent two distinct patterns of development. The early identification of a focus of work activity in group 1, the movement towards a place in which to conduct this, and the further development of domain relevant skills occurred faster, and in a more concentrated manner than in group 2. The narrative reports of group 1 indicated that motivation had formed as a result of childhood and adolescence experiences and was drawn on in adulthood. The need for group 2 participants to clarify their work interests, often after

considerable periods of time, indicated via their narratives not only a slower development of their career, but the movement towards work as a vehicle for clarifying their personal motivation. It is important to note, however, that Erikson (1958) directly, and Levinson (1978 and 1996) by implication link the identification of this key area of life focus to be indicative of identity formation. This would suggest that group 2 participants might be acting more slowly in reaching the decision on who they are as individuals.

The broad pattern that has emerged from the literature on the exceptional creative individual in a variety of work domains is of:

- Commonly a choice of work area made during childhood and adolescence, or during the university years (e.g. Gardner 1993).
- A move towards a study/work location that involves one or more role models that demonstrate work standards and methods, as well as teaching and providing work opportunities (e.g. Zuckerman 1977).
- A focused period of learning, sometimes described as a ten year period, during which time productivity and contribution emerge. If the exceptional creative individual started their career earlier than early adulthood (via the study and work undertaken in childhood and adolescence) significant contributions to the domain and field may emerge earlier and during this period of early adulthood (e.g. Gardner 1993, Simonton 1994, Feldman 1999).
- A focus on the 'whole' domain, i.e. contributing to the domain and field of 'physics', rather than one in a locality. This is an important distinction to make in this study. If Roe's study of scientists is used as an example, these individuals were studying and working on an area, e.g. physics or biology, that potentially impacted upon the whole domain, rather than a localised version of it, e.g. within a single workplace as in this study.

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's study of young artists examined people working on art in a locality (Chicago) but who were dealing with a 'field' (gallery owners) that linked into the whole field of art (other galleries and gallery owners) across the country. This body of literature dealing with recent exceptional creative individuals implies a concentrated period of focus on one domain and one field (Roe 1953) though it must be said that counter-examples exist (e.g. Chomsky).

- A peak of contribution likely to emerge, depending on the domain of work, from the early thirties through until the mid forties or later (e.g. Lehman 1953, Lindauer 1992, 1993).

Group 1 participants appear to present a pattern of development that related most closely to the experience of the exceptional creative individual – in the early location and commitment to a course of work. However, differences emerge in the domain focus, e.g. a localised context. Implicitly they did not perceive themselves as working in or contributing to a whole domain, (e.g. art or science). Contribution is therefore locally focused. The details of peak of performance and of contribution have not been possible to measure with data emerging from biographic interview.

The participant sample shows a number of characteristics proposed by Levinson (1978 and 1996) as typical in this particular life period. This is shown in:

- An orientation to work and career that is exploratory at the outset and subject to change if perceived to be inappropriate on the basis of experience gained.
- The gradual shift or development of the life structure priorities over time, reflecting both experimentation or exploration on the part of the individuals, and a settling of choices.

- Gradual shifts in motivation over time within the group overall, from extrinsic to intrinsic - reflecting Levinson's views on potential for 'becoming one's own person' as an individual progresses through life.

Chapter 7 examines the next time period, the midlife decade from 35 - 45 years old.

Chapter 7 - The Midlife Period (from 35 – 45 years old)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will address two of the research questions:

Research Question 3: Will participants experience events predicted in the literature for the mid-life period?

And

Research Question 4: Will individuals alter / change their creative activity as a result of experiences and decisions of the mid-life period?

To achieve this, the chapter will present:

- 7.2 (For research question 3) the research data against the characteristics considered present in literature on the midlife period. By doing this, the research allows for the possibility, argued by some authors, that the midlife phenomenon does not exist.
  - 7.2.1 The 'external' experiences of participants in the midlife decade.
  - 7.2.2 The 'internal' experiences of participants in the midlife decade.
  - 7.2.3 Anticipating the midlife.
- On the assumption that these experiences are detected, the research will consider any patterns that appear, their impact on creative work, and the differences, if any, between the two groups in this respect.
- 7.3 (For research question 4) the research data will be examined for potential changes to creative work, including those proposed by Elliot Jaques (1965).
- 7.4 Experiences of female participants.
- 7.5 Conclusions to the review of the midlife period.

Please note: data tables from this point present totals for the whole participant sample, as well as groups 1 and 2. The reason for this change is that the two groups, the 'early

starters' and the 'later starters' appear to converge in their experiences from this time period.

7.2 Midlife Experiences

A range of experiences that have been associated with the midlife in literature are listed below. The midlife experiences of participants will be analysed against the characteristics of the midlife shown in tables 7.1 - 7.3.

Table 7.1: "External" midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: "External" (Social / family / workplace.)	Literature Source:
Relationship changes: (children becoming more independent, parents becoming dependent).	Jaques 1965: p506; Neugarten 1969: p121/1 and 1979: p890; Gould 1979: p2; McIlroy 1984: p625; Quadrio 1986: p34/5; McAdams 1993: p198; Levinson 1996: p385; Moen and Wethington 1999: p7; Whitborne and Connolly 1999: p36/7; Rosenberg et al 1999: p58; Reid and Willis 1999: p278.
Employment:	
- A decision to change employment.	Levinson 1996. Moen and Wethington 1999.
- The end of one career, the beginning of another.	Levinson 1996.
- The loss of a job. The end of job progression.	Corlett and Milner 1993.
Events may represent continuity or discontinuity with the past.	Moen and Wethington 1999.

Table 7.2: "Internal" midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: "Internal". (Feelings, the physical.)	Literature Source:
Personal questioning and re-evaluation:	Jung 1933. Erikson 1958. Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996. Quadrio 1986. Neugarten 1969. Stein 1983. Corlett and Milner 1993. Quenk 1993, 1996. Gould 1979. Moen and Wethington 1999.
- Recognizing failures in self-development.	Levinson 1996
- Debating what actions or behaviours to devote oneself to in future.	Levinson 1996.
Recognition of ageing and physical decline:	Jung 1933. Erikson 1958. Levinson 1978, 1986, 1996. Quadrio 1986. Neugarten 1969. Gould 1979. McIlroy 1984. McAdams 1993. Dunn 1999.
- Recognition of personal mortality.	Jung 1933. Levinson 1978, 1996. Jaques 1965. Brim 1976. Neugarten 1968. McAdams 1993.
- A sense of time ahead being limited.	Jaques 1965. Wolf 1991.

Midlife Characteristic: "Internal". (Feelings, the physical.)	Literature Source:
Recognition of the 'aspirations and achievement' gap.	Brim 1976. Levinson 1978, 1996.
'Desocialization'. (Recognition of personal needs, hopes and ambitions in contrast to those that have been 'imposed' or expected in some way externally.)	Brim 1976. Levinson 1978, 1996. Stein 1983. Corlett and Milner 1993. Quenk 1993, 1996.

Table 7.3: Anticipating the midlife:

Midlife Characteristic: Personal background/context	Literature Source:
Are midlife changes/experiences 'expected' or 'unexpected'? (Predictability is suggested as supporting preparation for the transition. Unexpected changes may prove harder to respond to.)	Moen and Wethington 1999. Wheaton 1990 White and Edwards 1990
Is there evidence of personal 'success' in earlier life? (Assumed to reduce the intensity and/or make midlife experiences more positive in outcome.)	Moen and Wethington 1999.
Is there evidence of a personal 'dream' in early adulthood? (Assumed to reduce the intensity of midlife experiences.)	Drebing and Gooden 1991

Research Question 3: Will participants experience events predicted in the literature for the mid-life period?

7.2.1 The 'External' Experience of Participants in the Midlife Decade

The following table presents the participant data analyzed against this structure of predicted experiences for the midlife as listed in table 7.1.

Table 7.4: External midlife experiences of participants:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences - External	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Relationship/role changes: (e.g. children becoming more independent, parents becoming dependent, changing relationship with spouses?).	**12**	(67%)	**18**	(81%)	**30**	(75%)	(2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 38.)
Employment - A decision to change employment or work direction.	**9**	(50%)	**15**	(68%)	**24**	(60%)	(2, 6, 7, 19, 29, 32, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 38.)
- The end of one career, the beginning of another.	**4**	(22%)	**4**	(18%)	**8**	(20%)	(2, 7, 15, 40.) (1, 8, 16, 28.)
- The loss of a job. (Or the end of job progression, prompting an equivalent change).	**2**	(11%)	**6**	(27%)	**8**	(20%)	(15, 24.) (3, 4, 8, 12, 20, 34.)
Continuity with the past. (The pattern or structure of life continues broadly as before.)	**8**	(44%)	**9**	(41%)	**17**	(42.5%)	(13, 18, 19, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36.) (9, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 34, 37, 38.)
Discontinuity with the past. (A significant change is experienced in the structure, content and/or direction of life, in contrast with the past.)	**10**	(56%)	**13**	(59%)	**23**	57.5%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 24, 32, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30.)

The patterns of experience appear to be very similar across the two groups - the early starters and the later starters.

Roles and relationships: Changes to roles and relationships reflect the full range of those described in the midlife literature. For example, children leave home, parents became ill, some participants divorce, or separate. In other cases, changes in the work left one or other spouse more dependant economically on the other as a result of redundancy or failures of work plans.

Employment changes: Though decisions to change employment are made in approximately equal numbers by both group 1 and 2 participants within interview reports, many group 1 participants had either initiated the changes themselves, or at the very least responded to them as a natural extension of what they were otherwise engaged in doing. There was a more 'reactive' tone or pattern in the descriptions of many of the group 2 participants.

For example: In group 1, the early starters, a participant working at the time as a Managing Director, planned to make a deliberate change in his life and work on reaching his fortieth birthday:

> "I made a decision when I was 38 that I was going to have some major project for my fortieth (birthday). It was a rite of passage, at the age of 40, to some kind of achievement. (...) So I became physically very fit. I learned all the technical skills to do a serious mountain walk. So I learnt how to do all these things."

He had new work projects planned to be undertaken on his return. These will be discussed later.

In contrast, in group 2, the later starters, (against a common pattern of externally prompted changes), participant 8 described his organisation being subject to a takeover by people who adopted a very adversarial attitude to existing working practices. He worked hard to support the changes being requested by new managers:

> "I would catch the first train into London (to work in the morning) and sometimes have meetings two or three nights a week, not getting home until one in the morning." He became very ill. "... I didn't realise I had absolutely burnt out (...) it was blood pressure for the most that was high". What happened to bring this about for him? "Not being able to communicate my intent (to the new board). I didn't actually mean them any harm, I was actually there to help. They didn't want that, it didn't suit their aims."

This example will be continued below in illustrating how it became the end of one career and the start of another.

Career changes: The end of one career and the beginning of another occurred for various reasons in the eight participants. For example in group 1: The architect found himself suffering from suspected tuberculosis following overseas travel, and was put on a sustained period of medication to treat this.

> "I was put on this stuff which completely knocked me out. I had to stop doing all this high-powered stuff, where I had 25 people working for me. (...) I just couldn't hack it, I was half asleep, and dropping off at meetings. So they put me on to a much easier job, designing and building the headquarters for this architectural practice. It made me look at what I was doing, this illness – and it turned out that I didn't have TB."

He left this practice, and started doing a range of other architectural work, for charities, and

using alternative technologies.

> "And got involved in master planning, schemes for the regeneration of dockland areas (in many cities). Working with a lot of different groups, pressure groups, local authorities, utility companies, and so on. I was simply a co-ordinator, my job was to facilitate harmony, leading to decisions between all these various groups, who were quite often at loggerheads, either through commercial competition, or through their philosophical point of view. My job was to bring them to a point of agreement of some sort, and to iron out a compromise, so that the project could go ahead".

These were skills associated with community planning and building that he had learnt in his late twenties, and not practiced in work until a decade later.

> "And then came the 1990s' recession. The 80s were total craziness (in this area of work), it was never-never land, and then (with the recession) came reality, and about 50% of architects were made redundant, including me".

What he did to deal with his redundancy will be described later in this chapter.

In group 2, the experiences of participant 8 were described above and are also illustrative of job changes. He was medically advised not to return to his former work. In the year he had been ill he had studied and trained extensively in a range of inter-personal skills and training methods. These were to form the basis of a new career and a wider reputation for creative work.

In summary, therefore, the pattern of experience of the two story groups is broadly similar to that predicted by the midlife literature. Behind the experience, however, is a different pattern to changes to work. Group 1 participants appeared to have been proactive in initiating work changes. Group 2 participants appeared to show a more reactive pattern.

Continuity and discontinuity with the past: 17 of the overall group report a life structure remaining broadly the same through midlife experiences, whereas 23 experience a significant change in structure, content and/or direction in contrast with the past.

7.2.2 The "Internal" Experiences of Participants in the Midlife Decade

We turn now to examine experiences internal to the individual – including their personal assessment of current position, personal definition, as well as what the participant might plan in the future. The categories used in this table are found in table 7.2 at the beginning of the chapter.

Table 7.5: Internal midlife experiences of participants (subjective, feelings, the physical):
Note: participants may be found in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences - Internal	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Personal re-evaluation and reassessment:							
Personal questioning and re-evaluation: (Major reappraisal of life and/or career).	**8**	(44%)	**12**	(55%)	**20**	(50%)	(2, 6, 7, 15, 24, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 17, 20, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30.)
Recognition of the 'aspirations and achievement' gap.	**3**	(17%)	**1**	(5%)	**4**	(10%)	(6, 7, 11.) (17.)
Recognizing "failures" in self-development.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	**1**	(2.5%)	(4.)
What actions or behaviours to devote oneself to in the future.	**6**	(33%)	**13**	(59%)	**19**	(47.5%)	(6, 7, 15, 19, 24, 32.) (1, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences - Internal	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Psychological turning points: "a new insight into one's self, a significant other or an important life situation ... this leads to redirecting, changing or improving one's life". (Moen and Wethington 1999: p14.)	**10**	(56%)	**12**	(55%)	**22**	(55%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 24, 32, 39, 40.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 25, 27, 28, 30.)
Physical changes and mortality:							
Recognition of ageing and physical decline.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(6.) (25.)
- Recognition of personal mortality. Death of someone close.	**3**	(17%)	**1**	(5%)	**4**	(10%)	(7, 18, 39.) (3.)
- A sense of time ahead being limited.	**Nil**	-	**Nil**	-	**Nil**	-	
Illness (including depression).	**2**	(11%)	**6**	(27%)	**8**	(20%)	(7, 15.) (8, 12, 16, 20, 27, 30.)
'Desocialization'. (Recognition of personal needs, hopes and ambitions in contrast to those that have been 'imposed' or expected in some way externally.)	**Nil**	-	**Nil**	-	**Nil**	-	

The above table focuses primarily on two aspects of midlife experience . First, personal reevaluation and reassessment. Second, awareness of physical changes and mortality.

The content of experiences is diverse. The following quotes are, therefore, only illustrative.

Major re-appraisal and decisions to change:

In Group 1, participant 7 described her experiences at 39 years old:

> "I had a very stressful year! I changed jobs, my father died. I got married. I moved house. And had a major operation."

How did these experiences coincide in such a short space of time?

> "(It was a) series of events coming together on a collision course I suppose. My Father died. He had always been very upset, I think, that I'd stayed at (company name). Because he always reckoned I was wasted. And for some reason, I suppose, he died, and within a month or two, I thought he was right! I owed it to him to move out. He'd done a lot for me. He supported me. Went without things to put me through an education. You go through all these things. You get to that point and think yeah, I owe it. Like a catalyst. (...) (But) I thought I am going to make a fairly considered move. I am not going to leap out. I will do it when it suits me. (...) In fact it took me about six weeks after making the decision."

This move, into a senior management role in a leading finance company transformed her focus on work and started a period of intense new creative activity for which she became recognised in her field of activity.

In contrast, in group 2, participant 4, then a senior manager in an organisation, acknowledged:

> "I hit a plateau (in my career) (...) I was getting typecast." Many positive things were happening in his work context and experience: "... but in career terms it was a bit of a period of stagnation."

A change of boss and work context prompted him to accept a company-sponsored place at a leading university to learn new management skills. The learning methods used, and his peer group, prompted a major period of self-assessment:

"... until then I had been encouraged to believe success came from winning. Succeeding in spite of others. Not valuing other people and doing things yourself. (...) It was a very painful period for me in rejecting a lot of my upbringing."

Both of these quotes constitute examples of "psychological turning points".

Illness: Three of the examples quoted above (in section 7.1.1 and this section - participants 7, 8, and 15) also illustrated the presence of illness as an experience and a catalyst to change. The recognition of personal mortality appeared to occur with the experience of someone close to the participant dying. In two cases (3, 7), following the death of a parent, both individuals were prompted into positive and constructive action in their careers which had not been undertaken before.

In summary, both participant groups reported experiences predicted in the midlife literature. Both participant groups reported broadly similar experience levels. The primary difference occurred with group 2 participants reporting higher levels of questioning over their future actions and behaviours. This would appear to be in line with group 2 "reacting" to these events and may represent part of their greater need to find some aspect of themselves, i.e. creative activity.

7.2.3 Anticipating the Midlife

The following categories are cited in the midlife literature as indicators of the quality or difficulty of experience in midlife and are listed in table 7.3 at the beginning of this chapter.. While they are not assumed to remove the issues contained in the midlife experience, they are assumed to be indicators of a more positive outcome to the midlife experience.

Table 7.6: Anticipating the midlife

Note: Participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences – Personal Context	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Midlife changes/experiences 'expected'.	**4**	(22%)	**5**	(23%)	**9**	(22.5%)	(2, 6, 19, 29.) (12, 25, 26, 28, 34.)
Midlife changes/experiences 'unexpected'.	**10**	(56%)	**15**	(68%)	**25**	(62.5%)	(7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 32, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 27, 30, 37, 38.)
No reports in participant interviews.	**4**	(22%)	**2**	(9%)	**6**	(15%)	(31, 33, 35, 36.) (9, 23.)
(Note: participant listing for 'expected' or 'unexpected' is for the primary or main midlife experience described.)							
Is there evidence of personal 'success' in earlier life? (Assumed to reduce the intensity of midlife experiences.)	**16**	(89%)	**13**	(59%)	**29**	(72.5%)	(6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 34.)
Is there evidence of a personal 'dream' in early adulthood? (Assumed to reduce the intensity of midlife experiences.)	**15**	(83%)	**6**	(27%)	**21**	(52.5%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 16, 20, 22, 23, 28.)

Examining the above table and considering the individuals who had 'expected' or 'unexpected' transitions we find the figures in both groups are broadly the same. In this sample the intensity or impact of events described did not appear to be any 'easier' when 'expected'.

There were no direct references to a 'dream' in interview reports. (The 'dream' within life span literature is taken to be indicative of a sense of self within the adult world.) This

classification was undertaken according to the clarity of direction expressed by participants and the stability of the life structure established. As would be predicted from the information contained in chapters 5 and 6 a higher proportion of group 1 participants appear to have a dream or goal.

7.2.4 Conclusions on the Experiences of the Midlife Decade

All participants experience some of the experiences predicted for the midlife decade by midlife literature. There are no strong differences showing between the two story groups in the patterns of 'external' midlife experiences. The primary difference occurring in the pattern of the 'internal' midlife experience is the number of Group 2 participants considering action to take in future (59%) – in contrast with participants in Group 1 (33%). This appeared to be connected with the clarity of direction found in Group 1 participants – which carries through into midlife and beyond. In Group 2 participants, there were more incidences of new decisions occurring for future action and work and this was in their context of a need, or a sense of searching.

At midlife a number of participants also experienced a significant change in the patterns of employment in organisations as shown in the table below.

Table 7.7: Employment patterns of participants:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Participants who remain in organisational employment.	**10**	(56%)	**11**	(50%)	**21**	(52.5%)	(7, 13, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 40.) (3, 4, 9, 12, 16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 28, 34.)
Participants who leave organisational employment.	**7**	(39%)	**4**	(18%)	**11**	(27.5%)	(2, 6, 11, 15, 24, 39, 41.) (1, 8, 14, 20.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	Nos	%	Nos	%	
Participants who continue in self-employment.	**1**	(6%)	**4**	(18%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(36.) (21, 30, 37, 38,)
Participants who are employed in more than one location, i.e. in organisations, and outside.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	**1**	(2.5%)	(3.)
Participants who are married and not employed, i.e. focusing on family.	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	**2**	(5%)	(25, 27.)

Generally, within group 1 when participants changed their work at this time – their motivation was to develop new ideas and avenues for work – whether remaining working inside an organisation, or leaving one. Five out of seven of group 1 participants who left organisational work at this time did so for self-initiated reasons, i.e. of their own choosing. Two left for reasons of redundancy.

Generally, group 2 - the later starters - participants were attempting to change direction after being faced with blocks or difficulties. For each of the four participants who left organisational work at this time – it was a step towards an area of subsequent creative activity and recognition.

While there is a different underlying qualitative experience between the two groups, their experiences appear to be converging by midlife. Midlife can represent a 'self-ownership' phase – the point at which individuals make their independent choice about the work they wish to do either in organisations or outside them and this is the case for some of the participants in this sample. Participants appeared less influenced by the expectations of

those around them – also a description contained in midlife literature. At this point they seemed able and experienced enough to find their own way forward.

The underlying 'tone' of the midlife reports is of a 'transition', the end of one 'cycle' or passage of events (e.g. of children who are no longer 'children' and are reaching for increased independence) before the start of another.

7.3 Changes to Creative Activity as a Result of Midlife Experiences

Research Question 4: Will individuals alter / change their creative activity as a result of experiences of the mid-life period?

The work of Erikson (1958) in a broad population and Jaques (1965) with artists indicates that midlife can affect creative activity. This question is based on:

1. Erikson (1958), whose seventh stage in the human life cycle predicted a focus on the potential nurturing of and legacy left to the following generations (i.e. 'generativity').
2. Jaques' (1965) classic article, which predicted changes to creative activity based on midlife experiences.

Table 7.8 outlines the expected changes.

Table 7.8: Predicted changes to creative work following midlife experiences:

Midlife Characteristic: Changes to creativity or creative activity.	Literature Source:
Generativity vs. stagnation. (A focus on the 'legacy' to the next generation. Nurturing those that follow and/or an increased focus on creativity and its products.)	Erikson 1958.
Creative work/career may cease.	Jaques 1965.
Creative capacity may show itself for the first time.	Jaques 1965.
A change in the quality/content of creative work.	Jaques 1965.
A change in work method.	Jaques 1965.

Participant experiences are analysed against these headings.

Table 7.9: Changes to creative activity in the midlife period

Note: Participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences – Changes to creative activity.	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Generativity vs. stagnation. (A focus on the 'legacy' to the next generation. Nurturing those that follow and/or an increased focus on creativity and its products.)	**11**	(61%)	**9**	(41%)	**20**	(50%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 29, 31, 32, 35, 39, 41.) (8, 12, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 34, 37.)
A change in the quality/content of creative work, (e.g. 15 – holistic approach to wk. 33 – use of music for the first time.)	**11**	(61%)	**7**	(32%)	**18**	(45%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 29, 32, 33, 39, 40.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 14, 17, 37.)
A change in work method/process. (E.g. 6. 33 – language.)	**14**	(78%)	**6**	(27%)	**20**	(50%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 33, 39, 40, 41.) (8, 10, 14, 16, 27, 37.)
Creative work/career may cease or 'dry up', (e.g. prompted by external changes, redundancy, economic depression.)	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(6, 15.) (4, 10.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
Midlife Experiences – Changes to creative activity.	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Creative capacity may show itself for the first time. (Note: This is also being used for a 'reappearance' – a reconnection with something from the distant past.)	**3**	(17%)	**3**	(14%)	**6**	(15%)	(2, 7, 15.) (1, 3, 17.)
New direction, (e.g. new work context/'field'. Changed role. Change to the customers for a participant's work.)	**7**	(39%)	**6**	(27%)	**13**	(32.5%)	(2, 6, 15, 19, 24, 40, 41.) (3, 8, 14, 25, 27, 28.)
Changed direction (within existing working areas.)	**6**	(33%)	**6**	(27%)	**12**	(30%)	(7, 13, 18, 29, 32, 39.) (4, 14, 16, 17, 22, 26.)
No report. (Implicitly this involved continuity with prior work context.)	**1**	(6%)	**2**	(9%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(31.) (20, 23.)

Participants in both groups experience changes to creative activity in the midlife period (94% of group 1, and 86% of group 2). However 67% of group 1 participants experienced three or more changes, in contrast to only 23% of group 2 participants. This could suggest an early and enduring relationship with a domain of work opens the individual to more of midlife changes than a later and less enduring relationship with a work area.

Turning now to the individual areas of change:

Generativity vs. stagnation: References to "generativity vs. stagnation" were primarily associated with descriptions of bringing on others, or deliberate attention to the systemic context, i.e. caring for those around, and the future of those around. The primary references were to children. In other cases (e.g. 6, 11 and 34) it was to developing a team of associates and the effectiveness of a company's operation as a 'system'.

In three categories (generativity vs. stagnation, a change to the quality/content of creative work, a change in work method/process) a higher proportion of group 1 show changes than group 2. In the other four categories the reported levels are broadly similar. Many of the changes to creative work predicted by Jaques (1965) for artists occurred for this sample.

Selected illustrations of these experiences are as follows:

The creative work may cease or dry up:

The architect's (15) redundancy, loss of work and marriage breakdown had been referred to earlier. What followed was a gradual and progressive rebuilding of his working career in different settings, using skills that were components of his architectural work. For example, he sold project management as a service in different business settings. The skills of assessing and defining problems and the goals of change became something that was offered as another service, and subsequently taught to others. The experience of running teams and business operating were used in part-time management roles. Each of these, combined with others, newly developed, to form a new career which has led to national recognition of his skill and ideas, the publication of one book, and a contract to produce a second.

The 'rebuilt' career represented a significant change from the previous 'life structure'.

Creative work may show itself for the first time:

Participant 3 (in group 2) had undertaken voluntary work for the first time in his late 30's (with his main work continuing to be in the construction industry). He coordinated support to patients living at home with a particular terminal illness, and to those actually working with these individuals. The quality and professionalism of the counselling and training work he offered, with no prior experience in this domain, led to positive feedback

and job offers. He continued to work part-time in this field for the following period while undertaking professional training. He commenced full-time work in this domain in his early 40s.

A change in work method/process:

A management trainer (14 in group 2) had come from a background where training delivered was in set and defined ways, that would be considered 'teacher or trainer-centred' rather than 'learner-centred'. He described how he shifted from one approach to the other:

> "... I think because I feel very confident that I can go where the group will lead me, I guess I am more comfortable with that, and I've got a grasp on what I must deliver against what's advertised. I worked out in fact that you can deliver (advertised material) at a number of levels, *and I stopped worrying about having to deliver exactly the same teaching*. And I guess there has been something going on in the background (...) and maybe I've got different messages in my head now - but the learning, I mean *it sounds very silly to say the learning is the more important thing than the teaching*, but I think I am more tuned in (...) to what they're learning, and they have very different readinesses to learn at different levels. (...) I am aware now that in some groups I am covering certain things and it's completely over the head maybe of some of the group. And I don't worry about that any more providing I'm satisfied that some are learning at a level that's appropriate for them. Others will come to it and their subconscious may take it on board when they're ready. (...) But I think probably that's the factor, that I'm more tuned into people, to being more of a facilitator, than a teacher.

Changed direction (within existing working areas):

The outdoor pursuits teacher (in group 1), following a period of major organisational change at the university, was allocated to the University's business school. The school had a lot of uncertainty how to use a physical education teacher in their context.

> "I was offered the opportunity of joining the staff team for a brand new MBA programme, a combination of taught course, distance learning for managers that were in jobs. It was part-time, two evenings a week. All the course work had to relate to real work issues. When they wrote assignments it had to relate theory to what they were actually doing. So the big newness was that it had to accommodate people's experience as well as being intellectually demanding. It required a different way of learning from these men and women – if they were coming expecting to sit quietly and be taught by tutors, who were doing all the talking, it would not work. So it became my job to design an induction programme to break through traditional attitudes to learning, and to sow the seeds for "you are responsible for your own learning", and that "all the resources you need to get your MBA exist in your own group"."

This drew on skills first learnt in his early twenties, practiced in the context of the RAF, developed further in learning he had privately undertaken, and brought into a work context in a new form during his forties.

The changes to creative activity described above appeared often to be linked to life changes outside the control of the participants.

7.4 Experience of Female Participants

Levinsonian literature (e.g. Furth 1990: p27; Helson 1999) indicates midlife can be an important time of change of priorities within women's lives.

Forty percent of the research participants are female. Six out of sixteen women were involved in a marked change in work direction during the midlife period. They had a prior background of work in varying domains and fields. They then made a break with the past and moved into a new direction of work. These individuals appeared to come more into their own choice or direction. (Group 1 = 2, 7, 39, 41. Group 2 = 20, 28.) In all cases they built on prior work while taking significant steps into new areas of work, e.g. a journalist who becomes an author - a mother with extensive experience of voluntary work becoming a management trainer.

Five continued activity in the same work: (Group 1 = 18, 36, 40. Group 2 = 16, 38,) but also evident was continued professional growth and change within this area, e.g. moving from one form of training into a more advanced and demanding arena.

Two of the women emerged into the working world from a previous history of primarily focusing on married life. These two women (25, 27) undertook training in a domain of work while continuing to focus on marriage and their family. To undertake this training was a significant decision and change for these two women, in contrast with their prior life patterns and priorities.

One participant (1) left a work domain in which she had been highly successful and then married. She had experienced disenchantment in this prior domain and commenced a search for a new domain of activity that would continue into middle age.

One woman (10) married for the second time while also continuing to search for opportunities to work in a particular domain. A second (17) found, finally, an area of

work about which she felt positive and commenced extensive and progressively more complex education to support her development of work in this domain. This move fundamentally challenged beliefs and experiences she had held since childhood of "education is not for girls".

In summary, while female participants had varied experiences in the midlife period they continued to display a complexity of goals pursued in contrast with the biographic reports received from males (i.e. marriage or relationships, concern for children, struggling with values received earlier in life about 'education is not for women') and the impact these may have on a choice and pursuit of creative activity. They also appeared to move more into work of their own choice.

7.5 Conclusions to the Review of the Midlife Period

Research Question 3: Will participants experience events predicted for the mid-life period?

All participants reported some external and internal experiences predicted by midlife literature.

In reviewing (external) changes to employment group 1 participants showed a marked tendency of either initiating the changes themselves or at the very least responding to the external changes as a natural extension of what they were otherwise doing.

In considering changes internal to the individual, the content of reports were diverse with approximately equal numbers in both groups reporting becoming involved in personal questioning and reappraisal, as well as 'psychological turning points' – gaining new

insights into one's self or circumstances (56% of group 1 and 55% of group 2). The group 2 participants were more likely to describe themselves as considering what actions or behaviours to devote themselves to in the future. (Approximately two thirds of group 2 do this in contrast to one third of group 1.) The researcher interprets this as illustrative of the effort or work from group 2 to find an activity that related to their interests and motivation.

This period does have the quality or 'tone' of a transition from participants' descriptions – they are making shifts in the underlying structure of their lives (by Levinson's definition of this term).[1] As such, in the characteristics of a transition, this period represents a starting point of change, not a finishing-point. The changes initiated in this period generally continue into middle age.

For a number of participants there is also a quality or 'tone' to the descriptions of changes made where the participants' make more of their choices, and were less influenced by the expectations of others they may have responded to in the past.

Research Question 4: Will individuals alter / change their creative activity as a result of experiences of the mid-life period?

Thirty seven out of forty participants alter or change some aspect of their creative activity as a result of experiences of the midlife decade in ways predicted by either Erikson (e.g. 1958) or Jaques (1965), or both.

Forty two percent of participants described or reported a peak period of achievement during the midlife period within an organisational context. This peak is seen 'in

[1] The life structure is formed from the top 1 – 3 priorities of the individual – the psychosocial aspects of their life that they choose to live out. This is defined more fully in the literature review section 2.3.2.

retrospect'. This 'peak' is consistent with the literature on creative productivity and achievement. In all except two cases these participants made a switch to a new work context, either by choice, or through necessity. While acknowledging the peak of achievement within an organisational context, it was clear from these participants' reports that they believed other forms of achievement still remained open to them, and clearly this was important to them.

About half of participants reported experiences at midlife that within their story were pivotal to their creative activity and the achievement for which they were or subsequently became recognised. There were no completely new, or completely novel changes. All had some antecedents in experience or skills, even where those skills were subsequently redeveloped and changed.

About half of participants reported significant changes in self-perception; often a negative and inaccurate self-perception, was subsequently discovered and confronted in the mid-life period. In four of the cases it was associated with intelligence and/or ability - for example, the perception or belief that they were not intelligent, disproved by a particular event or development.

This examination of the midlife decade was weighted towards an examination of its component parts as part of a process of determining the nature of experience that took place and whether predicted experiences could be confirmed as occurring at all.

Yet there is a further question that it is appropriate to ask. Is this period as big a milestone or transition as some of the literature implies? Taking Levinson's concept of the life

structure, the 1 – 3 priorities or choices through which an individual will live-out themselves in a social context:

- 23 of this overall group experience fundamental changes that affect the future direction of their lives.
- 19 of this group make choices over the direction of this change – 4 participants are involved in experiences where this change came from some other occurrence such as illness or organisational change.

Chapter 8 will examine ways in which the changes develop that have been initiated in this period.

Chapter 8 – Middle Age (45 – 60 years old)

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to address the following research question:

Research Question 5

(a) In what ways did the creative activity of these individuals change in 'middle age'?

(b) Do these individuals display evidence of "the late life style"?

To address this the chapter will present:

- 8.2 Reported changes to creative activity in this life period.
- 8.3 Changes in contrast to earlier ways of working.
- 8.4 Plans for the future - anticipated and planned changes in work.
- 8.5 These lives in retrospect – perspectives offered from participants on key experiences and events through time.
- 8.6 The experiences of female participants in this time period.
- 8.7 Perspectives on "decline" in middle age.
- 8.8 Conclusion

It should be noted that the nature of participants' accounts changes in the material presented in this chapter – from reminiscences to include descriptions of what is happening 'now'. The nature of the narrative reports offered by participants involved material in response to an interview request based on the unfolding of life as a whole – how their work changed and developed over time. The interview analysis suggested a coherence within the stories that did not change with the move from reminiscences to current descriptions.

8.2 Reported Changes to Creative Activity in Middle Age

The reported experiences of this participant group indicated changes internal to the individual, externally in their context, work they chose and how they did it.

Table 8.1: Described changes to creative activity in 'middle age' (i.e. post 45 years old):

Note: participants may occur in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Internal to the individual							
Increased sense of confidence in work.	**3**	(17%)	**3**	(14%)	**6**	(15%)	(2, 6, 7.) (3, 16, 26.)
Engaged in reviewing the past, 'correcting' or adjusting their perception of it.	**1**	(6%)	**4**	(18%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(2.) (3, 14, 16, 26.)
Aware of the difference ageing and/or mortality would make to their work and decisions, (e.g. they have less energy, or are using their energy in different ways in order to conserve it.)	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(6, 32.) (3, 25.)
Increased sense of clarity on personal 'mission' and 'skills'. (Redirecting or focusing work accordingly.)	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(24, 31.) (22, 26.)
Redirecting their career in order to slow down, do less, give more focus to family.	**Nil**	-	**3**	(14%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(20, 22, 37.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Participants not represented in the categories above.	**13**	(72%)	**14**	(64%)	**27**	(67.5%)	(11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 21, 23, 27, 28, 30, 34, 38.)
External to the individual							
New work/activities: (e.g. a broad range of responses describing new activities undertaken, such as writing books, making videos, bringing new subjects into training work.)	**12**	(67%)	**16**	(73%)	**28**	(70%)	(6, 7, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 41.) (1, 4, 8, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 38.)
A new work method, (e.g. several trainers describe working from a 'co-learner' perspective rather than that of 'teacher' imparting knowledge.)	**10**	(56%)	**10**	(45%)	**20**	(50%)	(6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 31, 32, 36, 40.) (4, 14, 16, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 37, 38.)
Systemic focus to work activity: (e.g. focusing on making a contribution to the 'whole' system, rather than a limited/isolated part.)	**5**	(28%)	**3**	(14%)	**8**	(20%)	(6, 7, 11, 13, 32.) (14, 17, 26.)
A new perspective on work undertaken: (e.g. takes account of far more in work and decisions – or much more aware of what is not known.)	**4**	(22%)	**3**	(14%)	**7**	(17.5%)	(6, 24, 31, 36.) (3, 20, 25.)
Loss of a valued work context and colleagues. Faced with work the participant has no wish to do.	**2**	(11%)	**1**	(5%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(35, 36.) (34.)
No reports of changes made.	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(2, 39.) (9, 12.)

The patterns of comments made are broadly similar across the two groups. There is no marked differentiation between them. It is notable how widely participants interpreted any question about the nature of creative activity in this time of life. Selective examples of research data are examined from two directions, internal and external changes.

8.2.1 Changes Internal to the Individual

Fourteen out of forty participants made comments in this area. Two examples are used to illustrate these changes.

Confidence in work

For example: The counsellor (3), when asked to contrast ways of working now, with several years ago, responded:

> "Confidence. Confidence. I am now an experienced practitioner. (...) I know I can't 'fix' things. I have, at times, a deep influence. There (was) a sense of self-limiting, self-limiting, self-limiting. (...) A voice in the back saying you couldn't do this. You aren't very good at things. Look, here's someone not changing, and you've been with them. You aren't very good at this. There was something of that ilk".

One of the trainers (6) offered a slightly different perspective:

> "The more I do this, the more I realise I am good at it, so I don't have to test (check) so often. What I would do was to test almost every step, am I doing okay, am I doing okay, am I doing okay. Now I can test every half hour, or whatever. I don't have to go test, test, test, test, test, test, test. I just go test, seems to be going okay, (and then after a while) test again. So it is kind of improving my skill of being able to do this and to trust myself".

This may follow the accumulation of 'experience' with its consequent effect or influence on an individual's ability, confidence in and comfort in working.

Integration of personal 'mission' and 'skills'

Participant 24 described another perspective on how he had reached a clearer and more comfortable sense of who he was as a person, and how that integrated with his work:

> "All I would say is I get a lot more fun out of things than I did before. I have always enjoyed my working life – but I get more fun out of it now. Because I feel totally free, there is more going on up here (*pointing at his head*) than there was. Because any restraints, if that is the right word, disciplines, and things you felt you should have if you were in a working situation, just aren't there anymore. I don't think of myself as being any different between work, and outside work. And I think a lot of that is that I don't worry about the politics. I make my impression, and I go away and I don't worry about it – I know I am not going to let myself down – I am totally relaxed with myself and the way I present myself. And I have no hang-ups about people, in terms of seniority. I am more natural, and I can have more fun, and confidence to experiment. (...) it started a couple of years after I started (self employment) – it took me a couple of years not to be an employed person, as it were. And then it started to be different. And you realised that people were calling you in for a particular reason. And you then realised that people wanted you to be like this, so you felt the freedom then to give them what they wanted. And then as you learn more about yourself, like not worrying about being stuck, you think that's great, let's really go for this. So it is richer up here (head), richer in delivery. And I would see that continuing. I don't see any reason for it not to."

While the majority of participants did not reveal any clear change at this time a minority showed a marked increase in confidence and comfort in work.

8.2.2 Changes External to the Individual

The second area was of changes that were external to the individuals, such as work direction or work process. Three examples follow:

Work Direction (e.g. new work or activities)

Thirty three participants (82.5% of the total) embarked on some form of change to their work in the first four categories of this section of the table. The pattern within the group is varied.

For example: A former business chief executive, soon to be a composer, developed a range of skills necessary for her new musical work. A senior human resources manager within a major business had experienced difficulties as a result of an organisational restructuring, and a new boss. He decided to accept voluntary redundancy, and searched for a new job. This transpired to be management consulting and writing. Another former chief executive decided to return to a previously unfulfilled dream of being an independent trainer and coach.

Behind the data in the table, thirteen participants made moves prompted or caused by external circumstances, i.e. business or economic changes (nos. 3, 4, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 34, 35, 38). Would they have made these changed if outside events had not occurred? Nine participants indicated that this would have been the case – and that external circumstances became the framework for a direction that was already developing in their thoughts.

A New Work Process/Method

Twenty participants indicate the start of a new way or process of working – the second category in the external part of table 8.1. Given the diversity of occupations, there is not a common pattern in these changes, but for five of these individuals this change of process represents a significant move from an earlier way of working.

For example: A trainer (6) describes:

> "... I was starting to use more and more unconscious teaching, rather than cognitive teaching. (...) to set up a thing, have you explore it, and then you discover for yourself what that's like. ... for the first time, when I did it with this group, ... I'm going to let them explore it, then I am going to reveal what the structure is if that's appropriate. It was a different teaching process I used."

The female senior manager (7), having made it clear that earlier ways of working involved high levels of control on her part, tells now of:

> " ... (liking) big pictures, the long-term, where I am trying to go, and I like to let people get me there - with minimum intervention, except when I need to coach them, or help them, or support them. And more and more as a manager I see my role as setting direction, and helping everybody else get there".

A management consultant and trainer (11), having come from a background which he described as characterised as either 'I'm okay, you're not okay', or vica versa, told of a fundamentally different orientation in his approach:

> "I have got a really interesting dilemma here, because (if) I sincerely believe that you need to change your thinking and the way you do things, but if I come in here and say

> 'hey client, you're wrong, you should do it this way' I am not role-modelling the way I need to be, I am actually committing the very same thing I may be accusing you of. So, how do I role model excellence and coach in a way that still allows you to be who you are, and what you represent, but by changing the way I am, that ripples out, and invites you to explore what is happening here. And by increasing your understanding of what is happening here, you then develop new strategies (for working)".

The university teacher of outdoor pursuits (13) took a sabbatical, and worked temporarily with an external training organisation, also focused on offering learning via outdoor pursuits.

> "The thing that really struck me about the way they worked is that the staff actually talked about what they were doing with students as a team, and every course was reviewed as a course team. After twelve years of my (university) work where you were just beavering away on your own, I felt just wonderful (in this) new experience just being able to talk to colleagues about what was going on. Planned a review, actively support each other. The staff were saying "what I want for myself out of this programme is ..." and "the support I want from you is ..." - that is how they worked as a matter of routine. It really inspired me to bring this to my work, I enjoyed it so much."

This prompted him into using similar methods himself in other contexts.

Loss of a valued work context

For a few, however, the changes occurring at this time were not positive, and involved a loss of both a valued work context and colleagues. Participant 35 worked in a major academic institution and performed consultancy work as part of his role.

> "What I wanted from the academic world was intellectual stimulus and challenge, and the capacity to grow oneself intellectually. But the sort of job I was in, and progressively being in, was one that was systematically destroying it, root and branch. (...) that was because you would finish one consultancy project, and you would immediately be given others. And I was running consultancy projects four and five at a time. And it was reaching a point of literally the feeling of plate-spinning, that sooner of later something was going to crash. And (...) that if you reach your targets for (revenue) this year, next year it would be (doubled) is true."

The turning point for him was when his revenue targets and support facilities were changed without any discussion with him, despite his seniority.

> "I wouldn't have an office or a desk any longer. I would share an office and a desk, because funds are tight, this sort of thing. So that is what I meant about the psychological contract being broken. That I think the academic world as I knew it is dead, and these places are sausage machines. The academic world has been turned into a sausage processing plant."

This experience brought him to leave that work place and move into a significantly different one.

8.3 Changes in Contrast to Earlier Ways of Working

A further aspect of change to creative activity in this age period is how these participants perceived their work to be different from that undertaken earlier in their career, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 8.2: Contrasts between their current and previous ways of working:

Note: participants may appear under more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Personal Skill							
Increased skill and improvements to work methods.	**7**	(39%)	**5**	(23%)	**12**	(30%)	(2, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 36.) (8, 9, 14, 16, 25.)
Increased interpersonal and emotional skills.	**4**	(22%)	**7**	(32%)	**11**	(27.5%)	(6, 19, 35, 40.) (3, 12, 14, 16, 17, 25, 37.)
"It is harder to keep up, both professionally and personally."	**1**	(6%)	**Nil**	-	**1**	(2.5%)	(32.)
Sense of self							
Changing beliefs about the 'world' and 'self'.	**5**	(28%)	**6**	(27%)	**11**	(27.5%)	(11, 13, 15, 35, 39.) (3, 4, 14, 17, 26, 27.)
Ageing – personal mortality.	**2**	(11%)	**3**	(14%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(6, 13.) (3, 25, 26.)
Less driven or impetuous as a person.	**2**	(11%)	**4**	(18%)	**6**	(15%)	(6, 35.) (8, 25, 27, 28.)
Increased learning, and ability to learn.	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(6, 7.) (17, 20.)
Less influenced by the expectations of others.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(19.) (8.)
Aligning sense of self/identity with work undertaken.	**4**	(22%)	**3**	(14%)	**7**	(17.5%)	(11, 31, 40, 41.) (21, 26, 27.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Achieving a clarity of direction and/or motivation that was lacking when younger.	**1**	(6%)	**3**	(14%)	**4**	(10%)	(7.) (8, 16, 38.)
Work							
Taking a broader work perspective (e.g. systemic, strategic or long-term as well as short-term).	**5**	(28%)	**2**	(9%)	**7**	(17.5%)	(11, 18, 19, 31, 32.) (25, 38.)
Expanding and learning new work methods.	**4**	(22%)	**6**	(27%)	**10**	(25%)	(6, 11, 13, 15.) (1, 3, 8, 14, 16, 25.)
Achieving things through others, rather than personally.	**2**	(11%)	**Nil**	-	**2**	(5%)	(31, 32.)
No perceived change							
Minimal perceived shift: i.e. they hold the same views of themselves and their work.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(24.) (23.)

Participants were asked whether they noticed any contrast between their current and previous ways of working. It is notable that this is a relatively broad range of descriptions, and is focused more at the level of the person rather than on the detail of work. The descriptions included changes to how they saw themselves as people and how they worked.

Most participants in both groups show a contrast between their current and previous ways of working – 89% of group 1 participants and 77% of group 2. The number of changes cited does, however, vary with 61% of group 1 describing 2 or more contrasts, as opposed to 41% of group 2.

A small number of participant quotes will be used to illustrate this experience.

Changing beliefs about the world and self:

For example: Participant 11 came from a background of disability and associated feelings of marginality. He had worked extremely hard on these feelings in the previous decade. In a quote used, in part, earlier, he commented on changes to his work over time:

> "The difference was that I was coming at it from the "I'm not okay" position, which I then flipped into "I'm okay, you're not okay".

Talking from a position where he now believed he works with people from a point of equality, he said:

> "It has taken me some years to get through that, and I think I'm through it now - and that's a difference between how I go about things now in my mid-forties, compared to how I would have done it, say, in my twenties and thirties."

Increased interpersonal and work skills:

This commonly involved changes in the level of personal confidence that impacted work and personal skills. For example, the female senior manager (7) described how:

> "the biggest change in me has been over the last two and a half years. There is no two ways about that, in terms of work, and what I think I can do. Now whether that is because I have a boss (...) - he has an infinite belief in my capacity, in the sense that he over-realises what I can do. But like to him there is nothing I can't do. (...) And probably until the last two and a half years I have never felt vaguely fulfilled in a job. I sense, for the first time, I am actually using my brain properly. I'm pushing it. And I surprise myself with the capacity sometimes. This isn't me bullshitting, in terms of

me actually achieving things, and looking around, I see in the last two and a half years that improving, or getting better than the previous five."

Expanding and learning new work methods:

Four participants, (6, 11, 13, 14), all trainers reported similar changes to their work process. For differing reasons, and in differing ways, they had each reached a point of working as "co-learners" with the people they are engaged to train. For example, participant 14, coming from a background where he presented very precise and controlled material told of his change:

"... I feel very confident I can go where the group will lead me. I guess I am more comfortable with that. (...) I have stopped worrying about having to deliver exactly the same teaching. (...) But (my) learning, it sounds very silly to say, the learning is more important than the teaching, I think I am more tuned in to what they are learning, and they have very different readiness to learn at different levels."

8.4 The Future - Anticipated and Planned Changes in Work

Anticipated and planned changes in work are also an indicator of activity at this age. Therefore, what did participants expect from the future, in either plans to change the way they worked, or future challenges?

Table 8.3: Future changes planned or anticipated in work:

Note: participants may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
New projects: (e.g. new products, businesses, work, book, methods.)	**7**	(39%)	**4**	(18%)	**11**	(27.5%)	(6, 15, 19, 24, 29, 33, 39.) (1, 14, 17, 38.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
New developments: (e.g. to existing patterns of work, relationships or communications).	**5**	(28%)	**3**	(14%)	**8**	(20%)	(7, 11, 15, 18, 40.) (1, 3, 8.)
New directions: (e.g. rethinking and redefining their present direction of work).	**6**	(33%)	**4**	(18%)	**10**	(25%)	(2, 13, 31, 35, 36, 41.) (20, 23, 26, 28.)
"Staying open to events": (e.g. participants report "I'll wait and see".)	**Nil**	-	**3**	(14%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(9, 10, 27.)
Skill development.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(33.) (8.)
Future is seen with unhappiness or uncertainty.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	**1**	(2.5%)	(34.)
Coping with physical changes and difficulties. (E.g. impact of certain illnesses and physical changes non work.)	**1**	(6%)	**Nil**	-	**1**	(2.5%)	(36.)
New Projects: Non-work, i.e. taking up art, and learning music.	**2**	(11%)	**Nil**	-	**2**	(5%)	(33, 41.)
No changes planned/anticipated.	**1**	(6%)	**5**	(23%)	**6**	(15%)	(32.) (4, 12, 16, 21, 25.)

The patterns of descriptions across the two main groups are again broadly similar – yet group 1 participants seem to be involved in more future plans for work than group 2. The changes described by participants are about desired or anticipated changes. They tend to be generalized in their nature. When examined in conjunction with table 8.4 below there may be

indications of why the plans are more generalised. (There are some indications appearing in table 8.4 of uncertainty in the 'tone' of interview reports in 'how' to achieve desired change.)

Participants were also asked about challenges they faced. This question accessed an emotional perspective on the difficulties anticipated within planned changes described above. Second, it surfaced indications of decisions to change not yet made, or with which participants were struggling.

Table 8.4: The 'challenges' anticipated in future work:

Note: Participants may occur in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Work-related challenges							
Developing a change in the work method or process currently used.	**4**	(22%)	**5**	(23%)	**9**	(22.5%)	(6, 11, 18, 31.) (1, 3, 17, 25, 30.)
Developing planned new work projects.	**3**	(17%)	**4**	(18%)	**7**	(17.5%)	(19, 24, 35.) (1, 4, 8, 28.)
Developing current work projects.	**2**	(11%)	**1**	(5%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(7, 32.) (10.)
Making a decision on a change in direction.	**5**	(27%)	**5**	(23%)	**10**	(25%)	(2, 11, 29, 39, 41.) (14, 20, 23, 26, 28.)
Achieving further recognition and influence.	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(15, 18.) (8, 21.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Finding new work.	**1**	(6%)	**2**	(9%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(33.) (4, 38.)
Maintaining a balance between work and private life.	**1**	(6%)	**Nil**	-	**1**	(2.5%)	(40.)
Personal and domestic challenges							
Changing domestic circumstances and relationships.	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	**2**	(5%)	(16, 27.)
Ageing	**Nil**	-	**3**	(14%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(3, 23, 25.)
Whether or not to retire.	**1**	(6%)	**Nil**	-	**1**	(2.5%)	(32.)
No described or perceived challenges.	**2**	(11%)	**5**	(23%)	**7**	(17.5%)	(13, 36.) (9, 12, 22, 34, 37.)

In this sample, a larger number anticipated change and described feelings or uncertainties associated with this rather than reported specific planned changes. In addition, different descriptions of time are evident - some participants looked years ahead, others looked only months away. In all except three cases (6, 14, 19) the challenges represented an incremental development of a previous position. There is a significant element in these descriptions of how to plan and bring about change. The challenges participants perceived in this, and the associated uncertainty may have been affected by personal skill. Another perspective is that many of them have moved out of organisational work, and now work for themselves - this has taken them from a support structure, where others were present to often support or resource changes in work.

Achieving further recognition and influence

The architect, who in this age period worked in several roles, responded:

> "Gradually, I would like to do more lecturing and more tutoring, and less hands-on business management. But having said that, as I am saying it I am aware that I need to keep my feet firmly on the ground, and therefore what I am doing at the moment, which is a mixture of 'advice' and 'doing' is quite a good balance. So I would never want to completely leave 'doing'."

Ageing

For example: Turning first to incremental or adaptive changes, the counsellor described an expected development of his work which he saw as a reflection of, and in pace with his own ageing and mortality:

> "There are certain things which, I guess, I'll have to revisit. And one of (those) is mortality, almost inevitably. Terminal illness. Most of the work I have done around terminal illness has been around HIV, and that has very specific issues. (...) And I am very much aware that other terminal illnesses do not have that same level of support - there was so much money thrown at HIV in the first decade. But the other terminal illnesses, people are far less well supported."

He anticipated an expansion of his work in this field in coming years.

Larger-scale changes to work

For example: Participant (8) said:

> "I need to work with individuals on a one-to-one basis. When I come out of trainings I am incredibly high, I have got more energy when I come out of a training than when go in. I am very happy with that. But, (*pauses*) I now need to spend more time

empowering people on a one-to-one basis where I can track the results more - where I can be alongside them or being with them, acting as a coach, or mentor, so I can actually see where they are going to, and how they are going to get there. So, I am beginning to realise I am missing the end-product."

At the time of being interviewed he was planning these changes, and acknowledged the need to achieve a reputation and referrals for this rapidly.

Another trainer (participant 14), having spent a number of years building the skills of poetry, drawing and painting, practised privately, wanted to bring these and other areas of exploration into his industrial training work:

"... increasingly I ask people to do things like draw, which therapists have been doing for a long, long time. (...) Most people play, quite happily. In a management training course they think it is quite fun to go away and do something creative like that. (...) in the main most people are *happy* to be invited to be more creative. So, it is coming in a number of ways. I mean one of the other things I am about to start exploring (is humour) because I begin increasingly to think the way I want to go as a business consultant, trainer, I want to introduce more stimulation. I am getting a little fed up with going through feeding people very traditional stuff and what, I am always *trying to make sessions fairly lively* but I am increasingly beginning to find newer ways, more inventive ways of bringing things into training courses which break the mould. That seems to me to work very well for a lot of people. Some say, it is a bit funny isn't it. I think good, they think it is funny, good. They are telling you that it is funny peculiar, but often it don't take long before it becomes light-hearted and that usually is a huge step for a lot of people. *They are allowed to have fun*, to realise things they can't realise with their serious hats on."

Most of the descriptions of the future were 'externally' focused. Four of the participants (6, 11, 12, 14) made specific references to things they needed to find and develop within themselves in order to achieve what they wanted and hope.

Developing a change in the work method or process currently used

For example: A trainer (6) acknowledges some crucial practical issues about changes he has already made:

> "(I need to) reduce it to a size that means something, and by that I mean to a size which is practical, and then creating a plan. I have no plan at the moment, and therefore I have no strategy, and therefore my actions are random, therefore I am getting randomness. So in terms of creating a future, those are the principal things I need to be doing".

Making a decision to change direction

Another trainer (14 - already quoted above on 'external' changes) reflected a similar challenge:

> "The biggest challenge is when I make, and how I move towards changing direction. And I do recognise I am actually overdue for the change. (...) how I make the adjustment between my 'conventional' earning capacity work, and (work where) the painting becomes a reality, so that the poetry becomes more important. The challenge is about getting that balance, and making that move in a controlled way."

The majority of participants were future-focused, expecting and anticipating continued work in the future. This is in line with the findings of Csikszentmihalyi (1996).

There was an unplanned gain that occurred from the pattern in which this research was undertaken. Original plans at the outset of the research involved two interviews followed by a fairly rapid feedback interview in which to confirm research findings from the individual participant. Shifts in the focus of the research, difficulties in scheduling interviews and the time taken to transcribe material led to a delay (in the largest case) of up to eighteen months between interviews and/or a follow-up or feedback interview. Through this it was possible to gain an unplanned perspective of how a small number of participants' plans at one point in time had evolved successfully or otherwise, (e.g. participant numbers 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28 = 14.) It was noticeable how few of the stated plans for the future had actually converted into a reality. The causes of this were varied. For example: in the case of the former architect who had described plans for a second book, two things had happened. The book he conceived and wished to write involved significant research and thought. These plans did not sit practically with a range of other demands on him in this time period. He also found himself involved in an activity unexpected at the time of the research interview. He had the opportunity to work on a long-held goal of bringing a certain form of community-designed living from Europe to this country. At the follow-up interview he was deeply involved in practical aspects of design and location for a building of this type in the London area and how the community might run. Two other participants who had moved from an organisational work context to one where they now worked alone found themselves making plans for future work (something with which they were supported in an organisational context) that in practice were not realistic.

8.5 The Life in Retrospect

Part of the picture of where these individuals were on the path of their creative activity is revealed by how they saw their lives, self and work 'now', at the time of interview, in comparison to an earlier time, anything from ten to twenty years ago. Given some parts of the creativity literature imply a decline in functioning, e.g. the product centred/social acclaim approaches, it is appropriate to consider how the participants experienced this period in case their lived experience revealed factors additional to earlier research.

The detail used to illustrate these points comes exclusively from questions developed for Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) study with living participants from a variety of work domains, and also used with these research participants. This table indicates responses when asked what individuals were most proud of:

Table 8.5: Of what are these individuals most proud?

Note: Participant may appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Work-related							
Career achievements: (work successes achieved via skill or personal influence).	**11**	(61%)	**8**	(36%)	**19**	(47.5%)	(11, 15, 18, 19, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40.) (1, 8, 9, 14, 16, 26, 30, 34.)
Career achievements: (positions achieved, e.g. managing director).	**2**	(11%)	**Nil**	-	**2**	(5%)	(6, 11.)
Making a difference to the lives of others, and/or businesses.	**4**	(22%)	**4**	(18%)	**8**	(20%)	(6, 11, 19, 24.) (1, 16, 20, 26.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Moving beyond or outside the expectations of others.	**1**	(6%)	**2**	(9%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(15.) (16, 28.)
Integrating personal identity with work undertaken: (ensuring 'what I do' reflects 'who I am as a person').	**3**	(17%)	**1**	(5%)	**4**	(10%)	(2, 6, 11.) (1.)
Persevering in the face of inner and outer discouragement.	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(6.) (9.)
Outside work							
Relationships with spouse, children, parents and/or siblings.	**5**	(28%)	**7**	(32%)	**12**	(30%)	(11, 32, 35, 36, 41.) (8, 12, 26, 27, 28, 37, 38.)
Home: (The type of home, and making changes to it).	**1**	(6%)	**2**	(9%)	**3**	(7.5%)	(7.) (8, 9.)
Growing and changing as a person. ("The type of person I have become.")	**2**	(11%)	**2**	(9%)	**4**	(10%)	(11, 33.) (25, 26.)
Sport: (e.g. golf, rugby), and the skill achieved in it.	**1**	(6%)	**4**	(18%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(31.) (14, 23, 26, 34.)
Garden	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(5%)	**2**	(5%)	(7.) (27.)
Educational achievement (the achievement of a degree).	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	**1**	(2.5%)	(17.)
Being a good friend.	**Nil**	-	**1**	(5%)	**1**	(2.5%)	(38.)

The levels of reported experiences are broadly similar between the groups and are diverse in their content. There are two particular contrasts. 61% of group 1 participants reported pride

in career achievements over and above other areas in contrast with 36% of Group 2 participants. This is perhaps to be expected for the 'early starters' given that they have had a longer career focused on a particular domain choice. Pride over differences made to the lives of others, and relationships with others, is indicative of Erikson's seventh stage of adult development (Generativity vs. stagnation). These findings are also consistent with the work of Ryff (1989) on the self-defined measures of positive psychological functioning.

8.6 The Experiences of Female Participants

By middle age all of the women in the sample were actively engaged in their creative work – all except one on a full time basis. Two were 'employed' conventionally by organisations (17 and 40). The remainder all worked in a self-employed capacity. Those who invested priority earlier in life on partners and family were freer in this time period. While their children, for example, received attention, the women clearly felt themselves free to work more fully on what they choose. Increased freedom is a 'tone' of many of the stories at this time – free of the detail of family constraints, or the worries of establishing earlier work and careers, this group is making new and often adventurous choices about what they wish to do in middle age. In acting in this way these findings and behaviours are consistent with the work of Helson (1999).

8.7 'Decline' in Activity in Middle Age

This period of adulthood is one that is commonly associated (in research from a product-centred perspective) with some form of creative decline – a reduction in activity, recognition and perhaps quality of work. The potential interpretations of the decline in this period have been explored in the literature review section 2.7. It is appropriate to ask, therefore, in what

ways 'decline' appeared in this sample group. ("Decline" for these purposes is being interpreted as circumstances that gave rise to failures in work, an inability to produce desired work, or decisions to limit or cease work.)

While table 8.3 above indicated on-going activity and plans for this group and table 8.4 the challenges anticipated, difficulties were also apparent for a small number of participants. While it is possible that creative plans were still 'incubating', difficulties were described in the interviews about the activities needed to bring about a creative idea into action, or reality. The ideas were still forthcoming but the execution had become problematical. The following difficulties appeared in interview reports:

1. Planning and delivery: A participant found it difficult to bring about desired work. Repeated attempts had failed to create particular activity. Within the narrative reports there were clear signs of difficulties in planning realistically. For the first time in his life he was working largely alone – whereas in previous roles there were always others working alongside him, including people to whom work of this sort could be delegated.
2. Clashes between personal goals and the goals of others: Another participant also had a number of clearly creative projects in which she wished to invest time and work. This individual continued to struggle between what she considered others wanted of her – and what she hoped to do for herself. That single-mindedness to focus on work of her choosing, to the point of refusing others was not apparent here, and was clearly a source of lost activity.
3. Facing possible rejection: A different participant had developed and delivered work that had received significant local acclaim. To go beyond this context involved communicating and displaying this work to others. In facing that prospect there was a visibly communicated fear of rejection – one that would clearly limit this individual's

willingness to develop their work further, and would restrict the 'field' in which it was offered.

4. No longer being willing to face the risks associated with work: In the time between the research interview and the writing-up of the thesis a further participant, who had maintained contact with the researcher, told of being faced with a legal challenge to the quality of his work. While the legal case was, almost certainly, without foundation, it had implications for the time that would be needed to fight it – and the likelihood that future business insurance would almost certainly not be forthcoming as a result of this experience. For these reasons, this participant made a decision to cease trading – and to seek an alternative form of work.
5. Financial security and retirement: A number of other participants had clearly reached a point of financial security where the need to work had reduced, along with the need to struggle or seek recognition. Again, in the time prior to writing-up of the thesis several participants communicated the likelihood of impending retirement and adopting a simpler and more relaxed lifestyle.

The circumstances found in points 1 - 3 above may be associated with the move of many participants out of organisations into self-employment. The structuring of work, the social support and resources available were no longer there for some of these individuals. This was, at least, one contributing factor observed in interview reports. There may also have been other contributing life events not mentioned in interview. In this sample it seemed any decline in work output was more to do with practicalities than cognitive decline.

8.8 Conclusions

In summary:

Research Question 5

(a) In what ways did the creative activity of these individuals change in 'middle age'?

A broad range of activity was reported by participants in their context, the work they undertook and how they did it. There was no marked differentiation between the two groups. It was interesting to note how interview questions in their area were very widely interpreted by participants, i.e. very diverse descriptions of experiences were offered.

The majority of participants in both groups became involved in new work and activities (67% of group 1, and 73% of group 2) with smaller numbers utilising new work methods (56% of group 1 and 45 % of group 2).

The majority of participants in both groups showed contrasts between ways of working at this time, and ways of working earlier in their lives (89% of group 1, and 77% of group 2). The reported changes were again diverse in their nature.

Over half of the participants planned further specific changes to their work. There were also indications that these plans were less specific in nature than those reported by exceptional creative individuals in Csikszentmihalyi (1996). The reasons for this were unclear. There were practical implications – the future is less certain or less focused as a result of more ambiguous plans and more subject to influence or distraction.

(b) Do these individuals display evidence of "the late life style"?

The contribution of the existing literature and research on the exceptional creative individual to an understanding of changes in activity following the mid-life period is limited. The experience of the exceptional creative individual is summarized as follows:

- Product-centred research indicates that, depending on domain of work, the time of peak original contribution on average will have passed. Productivity may, however, remain at high levels in comparison to earlier life if the individual chooses to maintain work and working practices - and the likelihood of original contribution is related to the maintenance of productivity. In a number of the participant group members productivity appeared to be as high or higher in middle age than previously, though two fifths acknowledged a peak earlier at midlife
- The descriptions of individual experience in this period are generalised and limited. Exceptionally creative individuals in the domains of science, for example, may take on wider responsibilities, over-and-above their work in the domain, (e.g. this was a common experience of the scientists examined by Anne Roe in the early 1950s', and revisited in the late 1960s'.) They face the same pressures, misfortunes and tragedies as others, yet "they have a calling that makes it possible for them to dwell as little as possible on what might have been, and get on with their lives" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: p208).
- Csikszentmihalyi's participants' self-reports (from various work domains) took a contrary view to that of the product-centred researchers. His participants perceived both the quantity and the quality of their work being sustained over time, with their abilities and goals remaining "the same as they had always been" (ibid.: p212). This conclusion was supported by Lindauer et al (1997) from a research population of graphic artists, who

found that though working relationships with the 'field' may have fluctuated for his participant group, the relationships with the domain remained positive. For many members of the thesis sample group, the quality and quantity of work appeared to be sustained or improved over time.

- An examination of the "late life style"[1] is a relatively recent development in the study of creativity. It assumes (in line with the theories of Erik Erikson) that a person changes and develops as they age, and that the characteristics and qualities of their 'products' also change in line with the person. Studies in this area have, so far, investigated such changes in art, music and literature. For example, Simonton (1983) in an examination of 81 classic Athenian and Shakespearean plays, found that as a playwright aged they became more prone to discuss religious or mystical experiences, and the role of spiritual questions in human affairs. While no specific definition of the late life style has been provided, it is characterised by: (1) An expression of deeper thoughts and feelings, with greater economy of means. (2) Simplicity and depth. A reduction of 'form' to essence. (3) A focus on questions, issues, associated with 'meaning' in life and spiritual affairs. (4) It may transcend current conventions, and use alternative approaches. (This definition is drawn from Munsterberg 1983 and Simonton 1994.)

No clear indication could be seen in the reports of this group of the "late life style" described in the terms outlined above. However, another sign of this phenomenon may have been apparent. It was noticeable in hearing the biographies of these participants that for all except two of the participants (4 and 16) the 'emotional heat' had left the stories in middle age. The group was calmer with their lives and with themselves. The conflicts and concerns that were

[1] Also called the "old age style" or the "swan song effect". It is believed also to be a middle-aged phenomena, but empirical evidence for this has yet to be gathered in any quantity.

described in their earlier careers were no longer present – they showed signs of being more at ease and peace with who they were and what they were doing. This gave them a freedom to choose the work they undertook and how they undertook it. They were consistently looking for ways to work that expressed who they were as individuals. This was repeatedly described as a priority. This more peaceful presence is consistent with the findings of Lindauer et al (1997) and indicative of positive psychological functioning as identified by Ryff (e.g. 1989 and 1999).

Chapter 9 – Other Factors

9.1 Introduction

The investigations in this thesis have been focused on examinations based on life span development perspectives in specific time periods. In learning about the characteristic development of individuals and their associated creativity, the use of this perspective has a lineage in work such as that of Roberts and Newton (1987), Furth (1990), Gardner (1993) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996). The research data does, however, indicate the presence of other influencing factors, such as age, gender and occupation that do not always fit neatly into the four stages of life used to summarize the data so far. The purpose of this chapter is to examine a number of these and to present a preliminary assessment of the strength of their influence. This chapter will review the following areas:

- 9.2 Occupational and organisational factors:
  - 9.2.1 Contrasts between the occupational groups involved in this research.
  - 9.2.2 Organisational issues and their contribution to creative development.
  - 9.2.3 The work patterns of enduringly successful individuals.
  - 9.2.4 Occupational factors bearing on when an "influencer" might become an "influencer".
- 9.3 Gender – the experiences of male and female participants.
- 9.4 Age influences – the differences in experience across the age range of participants.
- 9.5 The influence of disability in the shaping and formation of creative activity in this sample, albeit small in size.

9.2 Occupational and Organisational influences

9.2.1 Occupations

The participant group, at the time of interview, represented 3 broad occupational categories.

Table 9.1: Sample, by 3 broad occupational categories, showing numbers of participants in specific occupations:

A: Working for an organisation (salaried employees):	B: Self-employed (hired by organisations):	C: Other (Self-employed, generally working 1:1, or alone):
N = 13; % = 32.5	N = 17; % = 42.5	N = 10; % = 25
Manager = 1 (40) Senior manager = 4 (7, 32, 34, 35.) Youth worker/scout ldr = 1 (12) Trainer / counsellor = 1 (17) Managing Director = 1 (23) Company Director = 2 (27, 31) Vicar # = 1 (29) NGO Chief Exec. = 1 (33) Osteopath / trainer = 1 (37) **Group 1 = 7 (54%);** **Group 2 = 6 (46%).** **Male = 9 Female = 4**	Management Consultant and writer = 2 (2, 4) Management Consultant and trainer = 10 (6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 38, 41) Outdoor Pursuits teacher = 1 (13) Trainer, writer, architect = 1 (15) Trainer / counsellor = 1 (21) Trainer / outplacement consultant = 2 (24, 26.) **Group 1 = 8 (47%);** **Group 2 = 9 (53%).** **Male = 12 Female = 5**	Composer = 1 (1) Artist & sculptor = 1 (18) Counsellor = 1 (3) Psychotherapist = 2 (25, 30) Writer = 2 (9, 39) Yoga teacher / writer = 1 (10) Outplacement / career consultant = 1 (28) Singer / voice teacher = 1 (36) **Group 1 = 3 (30%);** **Group 2 = 7 (70%).** **Male = 3 Female = 7**
Note: Participant numbers are provided in brackets beside each occupational category.)		
Participant nos: 7, 12, 17, 23, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40.	Participant nos: 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 38, 41.	Participant nos: 1, 3, 9, 10, 18, 25, 28, 30, 36, 39.

Note: (# Engaged primarily in organisational work.)

What was not apparent at the time, however, was that over three quarters of these participants worked primarily in a conventional organisation background until their midlife

decade. (The 7 exceptions to this were 4 participants who were married and focusing on raising a family and 3 in various forms of self-employment.)

The balance of group 1 and 2 participants was approximately equal across occupational categories A and B, those working in organisations, and those individuals self-employed and working in organisations. This indicates a balance of early starters and later starters (and their associated experiences) across these two occupational groups.

In the third occupational group (C) there were 10 individuals who worked primarily 1:1 or alone. Seven of these were women. Six out of seven of these women had consciously chosen to work alone or outside the context and dynamics of organisation-based work and careers. (Women also represent only 4 out of 13 people in occupational category 'A', those working in organisations, and 5 out of 17 in occupational category 'B', those self-employed working in organisations.) The higher percentage of women who are self-employed presumably represents an occupational choice that was easier to manage or more open to the inclusion of women than those organisationally-based.

Fifteen out of 18 participants in Group 1, the 'early starters', were found primarily in occupational category A, organisations (7), or category B, self-employed working in organisations (8). This appears to be an indication of their influencing work being a response to the needs and circumstances of others.

Another question considered by the researcher was whether organisational contexts (which commonly focus on structure and efficiency) might be constraining to the development and delivery of creative performance. Since 6 out of the 13 participants who remained in organisations during and after their midlife decade were manifestly creative in their work

and had good reputations, therefore organisations did not appear to be a constraining influence to this group. (This is examined further in 9.2.3 below.)

The balance of the MBTI types across the three occupational groups will be examined in section 9.5 below.

9.2.2 When Might An 'Influencer' Become An 'Influencer'?

The participant population fits into the category of creativity described as an 'influencer' proposed by Gardner (1997). (Gardner proposed three other categories – master, maker, and introspector. He argued that a creative individual may manifest more than one of these areas of creativity over a life span – for example an individual would 'master' a domain and may potentially act as an influencer, or a 'maker' of a new domain.) Within the context of Gardner's theoretical structure it is appropriate to ask whether and at what point these research participants made a shift from another possible definition of work to that of an influencer, i.e. when an 'influencer' becomes an 'influencer'. This is illustrated by Gardner's primary example of an influencer, Gandhi who trained and practiced first as a lawyer prior to moving into both a political and a spiritual arena. There were specific events in his life that moved him to the status of an 'expert' or a 'master' in the subject of law.

The biographic descriptions of the majority of participants strongly indicate that early career life was focused on learning a specific discipline of work and acting within what was expected and required situationally for that domain. The possibility of wielding influence, of moving other individuals from one place of perception to another, emerged later in most of these stories. 'Influencing' emerged earlier, overtly and more consistently over time for group 1 participants, e.g. in appointment to management or

teaching roles. In Group 2 an influencing role seemed to emerge later in the career of participants.

9.2.3 Organisational Issues And Their Contribution To Development

The analysis contained in chapter 6 (Early Adulthood) indicated that the majority of the participants worked in an organisational setting where a high level of change was expected – and the skills of creating such changes were in many cases modeled and/or taught. This suggests that 'creativity' is something that is at least partially, environmentally generated, communicated and supported – rather than solely emerging from the individual in their own right. The researcher concluded that in the cases of most participants, creativity was environmentally supported and expected, and that their work drew on and was developed by the environmental context. This is an interesting indication of the potential contribution that an organisation might make to facilitating creative development, and how the consequences of pressures for change on that organisation may perhaps enhance that potential contribution. (For example, participant 11 described how his own occupational and work process changes occurred while working in organisational circumstances dictated by the need for dramatic business changes.)

This then raises the question of whether the participants' creative 'output' was organisationally 'dependent'. The research seems to indicate that their early career phase did involve learning and performing skills valued in the organisations in which they worked. Beyond a point in time, however, these skills appeared to be internalised and became part of the individual. The researcher believes that this mastery occurred in the midlife decade at the latest. One can wonder whether these participants would have been 'creative' in another setting that did not have these values and teach these skills. This question can only be speculative.

9.2.4 Patterns In The Work Of Enduringly Successful Individuals

There is other data emerging from the overall participant group that cuts across the story groups 1 and 2. A sub-group of the overall participants have been enduringly successful in their work activity since the mid-twenties. These participants have mainly been in the education and work of their choice from the time of early adulthood and have received progressive recognition for their skill and contribution. These participants are:

Group 1: 11, 13, 15, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41. (A total of 13 participants.)

Group 2: 8, 23.

(A further four participants could be included in this group (Group 1 = 6, 18, 40; and Group 2 = 20) by allowing for short periods of uncertainty at either the outset or during the middle age periods of their careers.)

The potential reasons for this enduring success were identified in the following interview themes:

All of the individuals in this particular group identified with a specific domain of knowledge and skill by early adulthood at the latest. There was a distinct period of education and experience gained associated with their work. They retained a focus on this work, and generally did not shift within or from the domain. The following additional patterns are detectable within these biographies:

1. In all cases they worked "in relationship" with "the field" – both those in the field that used their work, and judged it. They responded to clear needs existing in the field, and were generally slightly ahead of the field in recognizing the existence of those needs. Their stories appeared to indicate a level of precision and skill in doing this that was not evident in other biographies. (This contrasts with a pattern in many Group 2

participants of seeking to shape the needs of the field, or lead the field into having certain needs.)

2. In all cases they demonstrated an apparent confidence, both in their own ability to do good work and in their ability to deal with the social context in which they found themselves. They made changes to their work and work context, often personally difficult ones (e.g. changing country). They did so with an apparent confidence that they could manage and master any consequences that might arise. They were willing to "engage" with the field, and put themselves and their work forward for consideration.

This was clearly an able group of individuals. The differentiation between the biographies of these individuals and those of other participants seemed to be in the act and skill of perceiving what was relevant to or needed in a field, and then responding to this with skilful creative activity. These themes parallel similar points identified by Freeman (1993).

9.3 Gender

The experiences of female participants have been examined in each of the results chapters, examining life span stages of time. They were included in this way because of the relatively small amount of research on the experiences of creative women.

The purpose of this section is also to add a further perspective on gender. The balance of gender is 60% of the sample are male, and 40% female. The proportion of males and females in group 1 and 2 is almost identical, so gender does not seem a significant factor in determining the age at which people start creative work in this case. A notable aspect of the biographic stories was consistent with the work of Peters and Newton (1987) and

Freeman (1993). It was apparent from the interview reports that the women in this study identified more goals or perceived demands on them in their lives (e.g. work, families and relationships) than did men, who concentrated their narratives on work alone. The attention taken to address these frequently competing demands implies less time was available for the development of a conventional career and creative work.

Table 9.2: The balance of males and females between Group 1 and Group 2:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Males	**11**	(46%)	**13**	(54%)	**24**	(100%)	(6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35.) (3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30, 34, 37.)
Females	**7**	(44%)	**9**	(56%)	**16**	(100%)	(2, 7, 18, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 10, 16, 17, 20, 25, 27, 28, 38.)

9.4 Differences Within The Participant Age Range

Research participants are drawn from a 15-year age range. This may, potentially, be expected to yield different development patterns across the range. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider this possibility.

Table 9.3: The spread of males across three age groups:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
45 – 50 years old	**6**	(33%)	**3**	(14%)	**9**	(22.5%)	(6, 11, 19, 29, 31, 35.) (3, 12, 21.)
51 – 55 years old	**5**	(42%)	**8**	(36%)	**13**	(32.5%)	(13, 15, 24, 32, 33.) (4, 8, 9, 14, 23, 30, 34, 37.)
56 – 60 years old	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	**2**	(5%)	(22, 26.)

Table 9.4: The spread of females across three age groups:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
45 – 50 years old	**2**	(11%)	**3**	(14%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(7, 40.) (20, 25, 27.)
51 – 55 years old	**3**	(17%)	**2**	(9%)	**5**	(12.5%)	(2, 18, 39.) (28, 38.)
56 – 60 years old	**2**	(11%)	**4**	(18%)	**6**	(15%)	(36, 41.) (1, 10, 16, 17.)

Retirement: The age range within the research group meant that those participants approaching 60 years old were on the brink of possible retirement. Some had semi-retired (males = 22, 26, 32, females = 1, 16, 28). Retirement at this age in this overall research group is higher than that of the Terman sample at a comparable age where participants worked into their 60s', (Holahan and Sears 1995), but it is now more common to take early retirement. The creative work of some of overall participant group had apparently been influenced and eased by their financial security at this time in their life - an ability to make personal choice free of other financial pressures.

Experiences of females at either end of this age range: The participants in the 55 – 60 age range were born immediately prior to, or during the Second World War. Six of the eight older members of the sample are women. Their stories involve expectations about following traditionally female roles, and the education it may, or may not be appropriate for them to follow. Yet four out of the six moved forward into work of their choosing regardless of these pressures. Women in other parts of the age range, including the other extreme (45 - 50 years old) also described these pressures influencing them, although to a

lesser extent. Females at both ends of the age range described how they broke out of stereotyped choices. Thus, there do not seem to be discernable differences in the experiences of the females in this participant group across different age groups.

Experiences of middle age: All participants had passed through the midlife decade prior to participating in this research. The spread of ages in the group meant, however, that the passage into middle age was varied. (This difficulty, within research, is not unique. Levinson, in both his 1978 and 1996 study, involved a group of participants with a similar age range. This had the consequence that his midlife findings were only drawn from a smaller section of the overall group.)

Only 20% (8 participants) are in the range 56 - 60 years old. Therefore, while there was a broadly similar pattern of experiences being reported in Chapter 8 (Middle Age), the fact that the majority of this group have several years remaining in which to experience middle age means that these results must be treated with caution as other patterns may emerge in time.

9.5 The Influence Of Disability In Shaping Creative Activity.

The research group included 7 individuals who may be defined as being physically or psychologically disabled (n = 4), and/or whose experience has been affected significantly through experience of illness (n = 6), i.e. some of these participants experienced both illness and disability. (Participants 10, 11, 12, 17, 27, 30, 36.)

The patterns within this group are different from the rest. Participants 11 and 12, who experienced differing forms of physical disability, appeared to display a drive and an energy for work and activity that in some way made up for inactivity or marginality

experienced earlier in life. Participant 11 had worked through feelings, experienced during his 30s, of marginality and not being "okay" that he had experienced in earlier life, and used this learning consistently in his professional activity during his 40s' – by not judging others, being attentive to his frame of reference and seeking constructive ways of supporting those he worked with.

Participants 17 and 36 experienced disability that directly contributed to their work – and became a major focus of their interest. For example, participant 17 (in collaboration with a colleague) has created work in which she influenced the National Health Service to make changes in their standards and methods of treatment for a particular form of disability.

Participants 27 and 30 each experienced illness in their 40s, of different complexity and length. It was, however, life threatening to both. The recovery process left them with a described need and a drive to work and contribute in ways they had not done before.

The experience of participant 10 was largely influenced by psychological trauma in the years of the Second World War. It was the researcher's view, confirmed by the participant's report, that a primary focus of her creative activity was and is to make sense of those experiences in a way that allows her to live a healthy and contributing life. This struggle is on-going in middle age. The experiences and actions described by this participant indicated a definition of 'creativity' not otherwise used in this thesis – the act of creating a healed or healthy life. There is not a 'domain' or a 'field' in the conventional sense for this work – but the context of her life, how she feels about that, and how she processes and comes to terms with her inner-most feelings. In Gardner's (1997) terms, this person could be defined as an "introspector" – one of the other descriptions of creative work in which a person contributes by reaching a new and different understanding of

human consciousness by their own inner exploration or introspection. There were clear indications of this in the interview reports of this participant in how she explored and understood the experience of her earlier life. The experiences of participants 11 and 17, described above, also fell within this perspective of creativity. They had used their experience of disability and marginality for direct learning and as a resource in their work with others.

In general, these reports provided indications that the experience of illness or disability may contribute to a drive or motivation to work in a particular manner, or in ways different to those experienced before. Additionally, a disability or illness may provide the material and the context itself for the creative work undertaken. Further, to achieve a transformation of an intensely negative experience into something that is positive for the individual, and that allows a healthy life, is also, the researcher proposes, an act of creativity.

9.6 Conclusions

This chapter has examined a range of additional perspectives on the data. The main results which affect the interpretation of this study are as follows:

- Participants in group 1 and 2, the Early Starters, and Later Starters respectively, are spread approximately evenly across the 3 broad occupational groups involved in this study. It therefore appears that these occupational groups are not a differentiating factor between the early and later starter groups.
- Organisations appeared to have influenced a number of participants' creativity, where they were expected to be creative and supported in learning skills associated with creativity and change. This illustrates the capacity of organisations to positively influence the life span development of a group of potentially creative individuals.

- The patterns of work in enduringly successful individuals illustrate the potential importance of working in relationship with and responding to the needs of the field.
- The spread of participants among the 'middle age' age-range (i.e. 14 out of 40 participants - 35% - are in the first five year band of this age period) means that the results of this part of the study should be treated with caution and subject to further exploration or confirmation.
- The experience of disability can be a source of motivation and experience which influences subsequent work and creative activity.

Due to the relatively small number of participants in this study these findings must only be taken as indicative, and not proven. They therefore offer possibilities for further research and investigation.

Chapter 10 – "Localised Creativity"

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine the development of creativity from a life span perspective. This chapter extends that examination in two ways. First, by examining the possibility that the creative development identified may be related to other factors, notably healthy development. Second, to consider the nature and development of "localised creativity". The Chapters 6 - 9 have examined research data against what is known about normal lifespan development, systems theory of creativity, and development of exceptional creative individuals in the attempt to identify factors that potentially contribute to the development of localised creativity. This chapter will consider additional perspectives.

In order to examine these areas, this chapter will:

- 10.2 Examine the relationship of the research results to other theories by:
  - 10.2.1 Considering whether creativity in later life is reflective of positive psychological functioning.
  - 10.2.2 Examining measures of self-actualisation.
  - 10.2.3 Contrasting research data with work on "flow".
  - 10.2.4 Comparing certain features of this research group with those found in 'giftedness' research.
  - 10.2.5 Considering the impact of whether or not someone considers themselves creative.
- 10.3 Propose certain characteristics of 'localised creativity' that deserve further theoretical examination and research.

10.2 The Relationship of Research Results to Other Theories

The focus of this thesis has been creativity and its development over time in a population with a reputation for localised creativity. Little is known about the life span development patterns of creativity in individuals like this, so the findings have been examined alongside data on normal lifespan development and systems theories of creativity, as well as what is known about the lifespan development of exceptional creative individuals. To conduct research from a life span perspective has precedents, e.g. Roberts and Newton 1987, and Furth 1990. What has emerged are life span development patterns of what may be described as 'localised' creativity. Another possibility is that these patterns are 'intermediate creativity', something that may be associated with exceptionally creative people who are not yet recognised as such or those who fail to achieve such recognition - in contrast to the 'Big C' (the exceptionally creative) or 'little c' (everyday) creativity described in the literature review (section 2.2.5).

However, we could also ask how this type of creative development relates to work on other, related special populations, such as self actualisers or the gifted. In a thesis of this size there is no space to examine these factors in detail but it seems important to at least consider the relationship of each of the following with creative development, albeit briefly.

1. Positive psychological functioning: Do the individuals in the sample display patterns of life and behaviour associated with positive psychological functioning and healthy development?
2. Self-actualisation: Do they display characteristics of self-actualisation?
3. Giftedness: Do they show patterns of development associated with 'giftedness'?
4. Flow: There is extensive research into optimal experiences, termed 'flow'. Does this sample exhibit characteristics associated with the flow experience?

5. Self-image: Does an individual's self-image impact on whether or not they are creative? If so, how?
6. 'Localised creativity': After considering the potential impact of the theories and factors described above, what characteristics may be inferred about the nature of localised creativity and its relationship with normal life span development?

It is possible that 'localised creativity' may occur in relationship with, or because of these other contributing factors.

10.2.1 Positive Psychological Functioning

It has been argued by authors such as Rogers (1960) and Maslow (1970) that creativity is a feature of healthy development. The question therefore arises as to whether the local creativity found in this sample group is nothing more than healthy development. One way of beginning to address this issue is to look at whether this group shows the signs of healthy development identified in other research. There is a range of theoretical work that suggests certain sorts of behaviour are indicative of continued adult development and 'well-being' in middle age and old age. The researcher has drawn on Ryff's (1989) work to provide an indication of whether or not this sample shows such signs of positive development. This interview based study used self-reported perceptions of well-being for various age ranges, i.e. how individuals describe and define positive functioning at certain times in their life (Keyes and Ryff 1999: p163[1]). Interestingly, Ryff's findings suggest that these factors peak in middle age. Ryff also proposed that these factors represented manifestations of self-actualisation (Maslow 1968 and 1970) and Generativity as described by Erikson (e.g. 1958).

[1] These definitions are also found, in part, in Ryff 1989: p199.

Ryff's and Keyes and Ryff's research involved 'scales' or continua that sought to measure high and low performances. For the purposes of brevity, only the 'high scoring' definitions have been used in the table below.

Table 10.1: Measures of well-being or positive psychological functioning in middle age

Note: participants will appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Self-Acceptance:							
Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of the self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.	**15**	(83%)	**15**	(68%)	**30**	(75%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 37.)
Positive relations with others:							
Is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy. Affection and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.	**14**	(78%)	**22**	(100%)	**36**	(90%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41. (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Autonomy:							
Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behaviour from within; evaluates self by personal standards.	**18**	(100%)	**17**	(77%)	**35**	(87%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Environmental Mastery							
Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing (specific) environment(s); controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.	**18**	(100%)	**19**	(86%)	**37**	(92%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37.)

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Purpose in life:							
Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.	**18**	(100%)	**22**	(100%)	**40**	(100%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Personal growth:							
Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has a sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behaviour over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness.	**18**	(100%)	**22**	(100%)	**40**	(100%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)

Table 10.1 draws on the interview reports of participants during middle age. While group 1 reports more highly overall on these measures, there is broad similarity between the two groups. The high level of reports in both groups suggest that, according to Ryff's measures, the group does appear to demonstrate characteristics associated with well-being and healthy ageing at this point in their lives. Ryff's descriptions are also strongly reminiscent of the type of reports given by participants in chapter 8 – describing their personal state, work plans and feelings about their accomplishments in middle age. In this group most seem to have a sense of well-being about their work and lives by middle age. It may be, therefore, that "localised creativity" is indeed associated with healthy ageing and well-being. It could be that healthy development has enabled creative work, or positive functioning and creative activity may go hand-in-hand, as Maslow argued (Maslow 1970) or that creative work has enabled healthy development.

10.2.2 Self-actualisation

Another way of looking at this research data is to consider whether the particpants are becoming more self-actualised. Creativity is, after all, one of the characteristics of self-actualisation (Maslow 1970).

Work on self-actualisation was summarized in the literature review (section 2.9). Ryff's work (e.g. 1984, 1989, 1991), described in 10.2.1 above, intentionally set out to use criteria that encapsulated self-actualisation. So, in that respect, data contained in table10.1 also supports the argument that this population displays certain characteristics associated with self-actualisation. To examine the relationship between self-actualisation and creativity in this sample a little further, the interview reports were also evaluated against criteria used in two studies involving interviews (Landau and Maoz 1975; and Brennan and Piechowski 1991).

Table 10.2: Selected Measures of Self-actualisation

Note: participants will appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Landau and Maoz (1975): p119:							
"Self-realisation means adjustment to change by using one's potential, being flexible, and looking for other and new ways of being oneself, becoming one's potential."[2]	**17**	(94%)	**22**	(100%)	**39**	(97.5%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)

[2] It should be noted that these authors saw the definition quoted in this table as reflective of both a creative attitude and self-actualisation.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Brennan and Piechowski (1991):							
Working for the benefit of humankind: the individual has a "focus on problems outside oneself that stem from the person's sense of a mission in life, of having a task to fulfill for the sake of others" (p54).	**17**	(94%)	**12**	(54%)	**29**	(72%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 14, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 34, 37.)
A philosophy of life: that the individual has "principle guiding one in how to live" (values, a spiritual or religious focus) (p54).	**12**	(67%)	**15**	(68%)	**27**	(67%)	(2, 11, 13, 15, 24, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 41.) (3, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37.)
Personal growth: "statements about working on self, one's emotional development, internal change and struggle" (p55).	**15**	(83%)	**17**	(77%)	**32**	(80%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 8, 10, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 37.)
Decisions made for the self: evidence of "turning points in life, critical decisions that have changed and deepened the direction of their lives" (p57).	**18**	(100%)	**22**	(100%)	**40**	(100%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)

In table 10.2 all the participants exhibit at least some characteristics associated with self-actualisation. This suggests that this group is concerned with self-actualisation.

Ryff (e.g. 1984, 1989, 1991), Landau and Moaz (1975) and Brennan and Piechowski (1991) all indicate that positive psychological functioning and self-actualisation generally increase with time and age. (Ryff also considers they decline in old age). The analysis contained in tables 10.1 and 10.2 were taken from the participants' interview reports in middle age. The percentages would be much less if they were taken from self -reports

relating to the 20s and 30s. Therefore this research data seems to concur with the proposal that the factors quoted above are associated with positive psychological functioning and self-actualisation and appear with increasing maturity. Ryff (e.g. 1984, 1989, 1991), Landau and Moaz (1975) and Brennan and Piechowski (1991) all worked with research participants in the general population, not those with a particular reputation, such as for creativity. The high percentage reporting the factors quoted in table 10.1 and 10.2 in this participant group suggest that they do display behaviours associated with positive psychological functioning and self-actualisation. Without further work it is hard to determine whether the creative work was supported by positive development or vice versa, whether creativity and positive development go hand in hand and reinforce each other or are overlapping phenomena in this and other populations, or whether separate terms are being used to describe broadly similar phenomena.

It must be stressed, however, that the above criteria, as indicators of self-actualisation, are rudimentary. They were chosen primarily because they had emerged from studies using interviews as a data-gathering tool and to permit a comparison with data emerging from this research study. Further investigation in this area would be needed for confirmation.

10.2.3 "Flow"

As well working on creativity, Csikszentmihalyi has developed and studied optimal experience, in which he adopted the term 'flow' to describe a state of mind associated with optimal functioning. His work on 'flow' was based on sampling reports of particular experiences close to when they happened. The research data from this thesis have been collected on recollections over time, rather than on specific experiences. It is not possible, therefore, to make a like-with-like comparison on this topic. Nevertheless it is interesting

to see if this creative sample exhibit characteristics associated with flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Table 10.2 below provides descriptions of the "flow" experience used in Csikszentmihalyi's (1975, 1990, 1997) three main books on this subject.

Table 10.3: The Structure and Characteristics of the "Flow" Experience

Characteristics of "Flow":	**Source:**
Presence of a Goal:	
Achievement of a goal	1975: p38
Goal directed – and a need for appropriate responses.	1990: p48; 1997: p28.
Feedback	
There are clearly established rules for action.	1975: p39; 1990: p48.
Clear and unambiguous feedback is involved with the task.	1975: p46.
There is immediate feedback.	1990: p54; 1997: p28.
Balancing Challenges with Skill	
Tasks are within the individual's ability to perform.	1975: p39
A specific set of skills is involved.	1997: p29.
Opportunities for action are evenly matched by capabilities.	1975: p50.
Intrinsic Motivation	
The individual is intrinsically motivated. They need no goals external to the self.	1975: p47; 1990: p67; 1997: p56/7.
A sense of purpose.	1997: p56.
Action and Awareness (Concentration)	
There is a loss of ego/self-forgetfulness experienced.	1975: p42
A loss of self-consciousness.	1975: p42; 1990: p62.
Transcendence of individuality	1975: p42.
Fusion with the world	1975: p42.
Merging action an awareness	1975: p38.
Concentration on the task in hand.	1990: p58
Unpleasant issues of life are forgotten.	1990: p58
The clearly structured demands of the activity impose order and exclude the interference of disorder in consciousness.	1990: p58
Sense of Control	
A paradox of control.	1990: p59
A sense of control.	1990: p59
A lack of worry over losing control.	1990: p59
The possibility of control rather than its actuality.	1990: p60.
Sense of Time	
Transformation of time.	1990: p66.
Time no longer seems to pass in the way it ordinarily does.	1990: p66.

It is perhaps worthy of comment that intrinsic motivation, goals, challenge and skill development feature prominently in participants' accounts. By middle age the participant

group were generally undertaking activities congruent with their intrinsic motivation; some had got to a point where they were working to achieve intrinsically motivated goals early in life and others later. They valued challenge and the development of their skills. The flow experience may be a common experience for those engaged in creative work; certainly, these participants experienced at least some of the 'flow' characteristics recognised by Csikszentmihalyi.

10.2.4 Giftedness

There appears to be a very high level of consistency between the experiences in childhood and adolescence described for creative and for gifted children, and this does not seem to have received much attention in the literature previously. The thesis participant group also demonstrates certain parallels with the patterns of experience found in gifted people. Three possible explanations for this overlap are:

1. The sample population involved with this thesis are gifted, and that is why they display certain aspects of experience associated with giftedness.
2. The gifted literature also examines the development of creativity, and the life span developmental paths of both groups are similar, and therefore similarity in life span experience may be expected.
3. The thesis sample population shares features and experiences with gifted people, other than IQ.

It is appropriate to examine, therefore, whether this sample demonstrates giftedness, or factors associated with giftedness, in addition to creativity. The potential presence of giftedness will be considered from several perspectives.

Winner (2000: p164) writes: "Children are usually defined as gifted if their global IQ score rises above some arbitrary cutoff point (often 130)[3]. The assumption underlying the use of a global score is that academically gifted children are generally gifted in all academic subjects." This measure is reflected in other studies and generally indicates the top 1 – 5% of students (e.g. Perleth and Heller 1994: p82).

Academic records for this participant group were not requested, and in some cases would not have been available. While school performance was discussed, this was generally at the level of detail offered by the participant (often minimal). Therefore, there is no commonly accepted measure of giftedness available for this participant group. This may, potentially, be considered to be a design-flaw in this research.

There is an acknowledgement within some of the literature that an IQ-related definition of giftedness has limitations and inadequacies. Multiple conceptions of giftedness that recognise giftedness within domains may be more appropriate (e.g. Perleth and Heller 1994: p78; Runco 1997a: p222). However, even the embracing and inclusive work of Perleth and Heller still uses IQ and psychometric measures as a process of identification of gifted individuals.

There are, however, other characteristics of gifted children with parallels in this research sample. Data from this research study are considered against a selection of these measures, the first being the levels of skills displayed in early life and the second, motivation.

[3] An IQ of 135 was the qualifying measure for the Terman sample although the median of the sample was an IQ of 147 (Holahan and Sears 1995: p10).

Table 10.4: Near-adult levels of skills in childhood:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
"Gifted children ... display near-adult level skills and interests." (For example: they read fluently at the age of 3 or 4 years.) (Winner 2000: p159; Sears and Holahan 1995: p16.)	**12**	(67%)	**5**	(23%)	**17**	(42%)	(2, 6, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 31, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 3, 22, 23, 38.)

Early reading ages were reported by participants 3 and 38, 39, 40. The Terman group was described as showing precocity primarily in language – read and spoken at early ages. There were interview reports from 22 out of 40 participants indicating an early level of interest and skill in reading and speaking. Adult levels of responsibility and activity are also reported in early years. For example, participant 2 wrote a regular column in a published (adult) periodical, participant 6 constructed radios, participant 11 played music and directed plays, and participant 31 was given responsibility for aspects of a business at a very early age. Two participants were also founder members of the National Youth Theatre. Yet the interview reports provide no measures of the level of skill and therefore these achievements cannot be taken as clear signs of possible giftedness in this group.

Table 10.5: Intrinsic motivation in childhood:

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
"Gifted children ... are far more intrinsically driven than are average children." (Winner 2000: p159.) They are driven "to master the domain in which they have high ability and are almost manic in their energy level." They have "a rage to master". (Ibid.: p162/3.)	**11**	(61%)	**3**	(14%)	**14**	(35%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 36, 39, 40.) (22, 23, 25.)

Data presented in Chapter 6 (Early Adulthood) suggest that the motivation of the overall group evolved over time towards intrinsic motivation. While it is not suggested that this sample expressed a "manic" energy level, or the "rage to master" of driven gifted individuals, in many cases these were clearly young people who had made a clear and firm decision to pursue and learn about a specific area of interest. It led, in virtually every case to public 'performance' at least at school level, or beyond. For example: participant 15 had contact with a senior and recognised member of the architecture profession who encouraged and guided him in his interests in this domain. Participant 18 designed publicly circulated documents (e.g. advertisements) for use by her school. Participants 22 and 24 were each members of the National Youth Theatre at different times. However, these interests and activities do not appear to be at the same level as those suggested for the gifted. It may be that individuals who become locally creative lack the ability of the extremely gifted but still tend to show above average ability and share a strong intrinsic motivation. There may be other differences between gifted populations and the localised creative, for example they may differ in access to and relationship with the domain and field.

A further characteristic of giftedness is as follows: "They are highly driven, non-conforming thinkers. Gifted children in all domains also tend to be introverted. They spend more time alone than do ordinary adolescents" (Winner 2000: p163). While 37.5% n = 15) of this sample were introverted, as measured by the MBTI, the researcher could find few clear signs within the interview data of this "highly driven, non-conforming" thinking.

In summary, therefore, while this research population may display some patterns of behaviour found in gifted groups, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that parts of this research population are "gifted". However, factors identified in research on the development of a talent among the gifted may be relevant to understanding of the development of 'localised creativity'.

The childhood definition of giftedness is linked to the potential to achieve. Adult definitions of giftedness are linked to achievement (Winner 2000: p165; Noble, Subotnik and Arnold: 1999: p146). Winner (2000: p165) proposes three possible 'end points' to childhood giftedness. First 'big-C' creativity – "domain altering innovations". Second, the achievement of expertise – while not visible or marked as 'big-C' creativity, it is a common outcome, particularly for Terman's gifted sample. Third, Winner acknowledges "the biggest issue for profoundly gifted children is making the transition from precocity" into technical expertise and 'big-C' creativity. The gifted may also become frustrated or lost in adulthood. They may become 'frozen into expertise' where the gifted person achieves domain mastery, but does not extend this mastery into the domain change implied by 'big C' creativity (Winner 2000: p166).

A fundamental tenet of this thesis is that this group has achieved recognition for creativity in a localised context. Within this group it could be argued that 11 participants have achieved 'intermediate' creativity, judging by the social recognition they have received, for example for a book written or advertisement designed. The 'intermediate' creativity group in this sample had achieved at least an 'expert' status – they have had to master specific domain skills in order to move through these and create a particular outcome. And while there have been some indications of superior functioning contained in the measures evaluated above, it does not, however, imply that giftedness was a necessary precursor to these achievements. In each case however, these have not been 'domain changing' achievements, one of the commonly used descriptions of 'Big C' creativity. It may be that creativity is best thought of as a continuum with 'Big C' domain altering creativity at one end, and 'little c' creativity, at the other. There seems to be a need for more work in the middle of the continuum acknowledging the development path of those whose creative work has been recognised locally or regionally for example.

The research findings, however, do relate to the recent giftedness literature (Subotnik and Arnold 1994; Arnold 1994; and Winner 2000) in a way unanticipated by the researcher. These literature sources have highlighted the experiences that may influence whether or not a gift found in youth becomes developed later into a significant area of achievement. They have indicated some of the influences that are found which frustrate the development and achievement of skill and creativity in a gifted population, e.g. the absence of role models or mentors (Subotnik and Steiner 1994). In contrast, much of the literature on the exceptional creative individual often implies a smooth trajectory of development from youth, through adulthood to widespread social acclaim. This recent giftedness literature (e.g. Arnold 1994, Winner 2000) addresses the struggles involved, and the ways in which a gift may not yield achievement. The researcher proposes that the findings in this thesis

show some parallels with this work. Research into the lives of exceptional creative individuals are sometimes less revealing in this respect, perhaps because it has focused on those recognised as having 'achieved', rather than those still seeking that recognition. This may suggest that research may be needed on understanding what the experience and process of trying to gain this recognition may be like.

There are some parallels between the life span literature on the exceptional creative individual and gifted populations. The giftedness researchers Subotnik and Arnold (1994), in reviewing literature on the longitudinal development of giftedness, cite Roe 1953, Goertzel and Goertzel 1962, Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi 1976, Zuckerman 1977 and Bloom 1985 as offering work indicative of longitudinal gifted development. All of these researchers are also quoted commonly in creativity literature as cases of the development of exceptional creative individuals. This suggests there may be more parallels in the development of the exceptional creative individual, and the gifted individual than the literature commonly acknowledges. Winner (1995) in considering the development of gifted children, reviewed experiences in terms of categories (e.g. home background, parental attitudes, experiences of schooling) that are also common on literature on exceptional creative individuals. Similar categories have emerged from the analysis of the biographies of the participants in this research sample. Admittedly, some of these would be expected in any life-span study. More important, there is a similar pattern of influences described within the individuals' lives in the gifted and exceptional creative literature and in this sample of local creatives. It is illustrated, for example, by Tannenbaum (1983 – quoted in Rudnitski 1994: p350); Albert (1994: p282/3) and Winner (1995) who each propose a model of inter-connecting factors that must be present to produce gifted performance.

Tannenbaum (1983): (Psycho-social model of giftedness.)	**Albert 1994:**	**Winner 1995:**
Superior general intellect.	Family members, close mentors	First born, or only children.
Distinctive special aptitudes.	and educators (are involved) in at	'Enriched' home environments.
Non-cognitive traits.	least two major transformations:	'Child-centred' families.
A challenging and nurturing	(1) The early identification of	Parents who model interest and
environment.	giftedness by others – and the	skills in a domain.
Good fortune or chance factors.	self-discovery and use of one's	Parents who allow independence
	(own) giftedness.	for their children.
	(2) (See/develop) a well-balanced	Parents who have high
	set of cognitive skills, increased	expectations of their children, and
	focus on one's own interests, the	provide nurturing support.
	presence of aesthetic values and	
	problem oriented critical	
	personality dispositions.	

The parallels between the literature on the exceptional creative individual, the gifted individual, and the data emerging from this thesis suggest a commonality in the following areas:

- A predisposition to a form of intelligence or talent (e.g. Winner 1995, Gardner 1999a).
- First born or eldest children (e.g. Goertzel et al 1978, Albert 1980, Ochse 1990, Albert 1994, Winner 1995).
- The identification, the 'noticing' of a child's talent by adults (e.g. Bloom 1985, Albert 1994).
- A home environment that in some way will support or actively bring out a child's talent (e.g. Goertzel and Goertzel 1962, Bloom 1985, Csikszentmihalyi et al 1993, Tannenbaum 1983, Csikszentmihalyi 1996). It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the quality of the support received may vary in the home environment of the gifted

and creative individual. For example, Csikszentmihalyi et al (1993) stress the child-centred nature of the home environment of gifted children, Ochse (1990) and Winner (1995) indicate the levels of tension and discord that may occur in the home of the creative individual, even if support for talent development is also provided.

It is also quite possible that children in normal populations also benefit from abilities being noticed and the support of an interested adult. It is not clear if the benefits of this type of support are universal or particularly important in special populations such as creative or gifted individuals. The relationship between the developmental factors identified in the literature on exceptional creativity, giftedness and localised creativity was not anticipated at the outset of this thesis, and any link would need to be the subject of further examination and research.

10.2.5 Self-Image Of "Creative" Ability

The individual's self-image has emerged as a significant influence on whether individuals pursue creative or other work. For example, Piirto (1991: p143) reported on a study by Barron of art students where 60% of men and 40% of women did not think of themselves as artists. The implication was that an individual's creative activity may be influenced for better or worse by whether they define themselves as creative or not.[4]

The impact of this is illustrated in some recent literature examining the influences on creative development in women. This recognises that a woman's entry into a form of work and subsequent activity is influenced by the prevailing conventions or social messages she receives, or by indications that the career she seeks is possible. For example, for some women, one of the issues faced is their 'right' to engage in creative

[4] Lindauer et al (1997: p143) review changes to creativity in a group of ageing artists. This study revealed that few described their work as creative – so even this absence may not indicate an absence of creativity.

activity when other matters in the home normally considered part of 'their work' (as women) remain undone – thus creative activity might be perceived as going against a social norm. Uncertainty in the early career period can arise from the circumstances of the social context (Walker, Reis and Leonard 1992: p202; Noble, Subotnik and Arnold 1999: p149; Arnold 1994: p47).

Table 10.6: Participants who viewed themselves or their work as 'creative':

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Interview reports directly indicated participant viewed him/herself or their work as 'creative' at the time of interview, (i.e. this was not an 'inference' by the researcher.)	**14**	(78%)	**10**	(45%)	**24**	(60%)	(2, 6, 11, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 39, 41.) (1, 3, 8, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 30,)

The researcher has examined the interview reports for indications of whether or not the participants defined themselves or their work as creative. A higher proportion of group 1 than group 2 explicitly considered themselves or their work creative. But there was evidence that even those who did not self-report as creative, in fact, were. For example, participant 7 (in group 1) – with a reputation for achieving business change unprecedented in her context - told the researcher that she did not consider herself to be creative. She then proceeded to explain that "all I do is move existing elements around into a new and different relationship". This is one of the ways used to describe 'creativity'. She then explained that she considered creativity to be something else, something akin to the creation of a new rose – to grafting one plant onto another.

Please note that the participants not included in the above table did not necessarily report themselves as not creative. Rather, their interview reports did not include an explicit description of their own creativity ability.

The accounts of the women participants (reviewed in the results chapters 5 - 8) indicated that a number of them had initially placed priority on the development and raising of a family. It was only on completion of that task that they moved into other forms of work, with more opportunity for development for their creative activity. This finding is consistent with the pressures on creative women described elsewhere, e.g. Freeman (1993), and the choices made by women participants reported by Helson (1999) and Subotnik, Arnold and Noble (1996) - their definition of themselves as 'creative' was also influenced by the definition and expectations placed on them as 'women'.

In summary, there is evidence that not describing oneself as creative does not necessarily inhibit creative work (e.g. Lindauer et al 1997). However, where an individual seeks to balance creative activity with other expectations or image they have, or that have been placed on them by others, the development and delivery of creative work may suffer (e.g. Freeman 1993). (The conflict in expectations experienced by women are the primary material cited in the latter case.)

10.3 Characteristics of 'Localised Creativity'

Writers such as Feldman (1994), Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Craft (2000) propose that there is 'Big C' creativity (domain-changing work) and 'little c' creativity (which may be found in the acts of everyday life) and these are the two main types of creativity referred to. Freeman (1993) and Gardner (1999a) both imply that there is a centre-ground, which Gardner calls 'intermediate creativity'. But both Gardner and Freeman either use directly

or imply the term 'intermediate creativity' to describe the individual that is working towards a domain-changing act of creativity and the associated recognition from the field, but have yet to achieve that status. The recognition of a middle ground, a place in which to examine 'intermediate-creativity' and its development, is a change in creativity theory yet to be taken up to any degree. This thesis suggests that the current definitions of 'Big-C' and 'little-c' alone are limited and that there is a further aspect of creativity in the centre-ground that is worthy of study – i.e. investigating the novel, original and useful act of creativity that has worth and meaning in a localised context, along with the individuals that perform that work. This area has been the subject of this thesis.

The biographies and work activity of this group of local creative influencers appear to indicate the following characteristics of localised creativity:

1. The localised 'creativity' in this sample falls somewhere between the 'Big C' creativity and 'little-c' creativity described in the literature review (section 2.2.5). There is a case for 'intermediate-c creativity' to describe at least some of this centre-ground. The research criteria for examining creativity, i.e. newness, novelty and utility, can be usefully applied in a localised context
2. This population of localised creatives have clearly achieved 'expertise' in their area, but do not have the all-consuming drive for their work associated with the exceptional creative individual (e.g. Roe 1953).
3. Influential adults, such as role models, contribute to the development of localised creativity in childhood and adolescence, as well as adulthood, (see chapter 5, section 5.9 and chapter 6, section 6.4.1) - as they also do for exceptionally creative and gifted individuals (e.g. Simonton 1983b, 1984d; and Subotnik and Steiner 1994).
4. The work of this group of creative influencers displays values such as self-development and service to others, which may be expected from individuals

displaying the preferences associated with the MBTI 'intuitive-feeling' type (see appendix 3) found in the majority of the sample.

The researcher proposes a 'continuum of creativity', along the following lines, embracing the four categories of creativity described in this section:

Table 10.7: A proposed continuum of creativity:

'Little-c' creativity	Localised creativity or the early stages of 'intermediate-c' creativity.	'Intermediate-c' creativity	'Big-C' creativity
Characteristics: • Associated with an attitude to daily life, and its contents. Might be seen in activities like cooking or home decoration. Not necessarily acknowledged by others. • Focus on an individual, or individual life. • A local domain, e.g. home or school. • The 'field' might comprise parents, friends, partners or teachers.	Characteristics: • Acts displaying newness, novelty and utility in a localised context, such as an organisation. • This creative activity will be seen and used by others, and acknowledged by them. • A localised domain, e.g. focused on the workplace or organisation. • The 'field' might comprise managers or users of the domain output.	Characteristics: • Individuals who may be working towards a domain-changing piece of work. • Individuals who may actually have offered a new, novel and useful potentially domain-changing piece of work that has yet to receive recognition by the 'field'. That recognition may, or may not follow. • The focus of work in the domain is likely to be beyond the local context, e.g. the domain of science or art. • The 'field' may be local, e.g. an educational institution, but with input or influence to a wider context.	Characteristics: • The new, novel, and useful process or product that changes a domain of knowledge and skill, and which receives widespread social acclaim from the relevant field. • The focus of work might be any domain of knowledge and skill. • The 'field' is likely to be broad, e.g. society, national or international in its nature.
References: Maslow 1970. Feldman et al 1994. Csikszentmihalyi 1997a. Craft 2000.	Reference: Amabile 1996.	Reference: Freeman 1993. Gardner 1999a.	Reference: Feldman et al 1994. Csikszentmihalyi 1997a. Gardner 1999a.

In proposing the above continuum, the 'intent', focus or ambition of the creative individual may be influential in what quadrant of the continuum they may occupy and where they seek to develop. For example, if an individual doesn't seek or expect to contribute to anything other than a localised field, then they may not contribute to intermediate or 'Big C' creativity (unless they make domain changing breakthroughs unexpectedly).

Aspects of this development will be reflected in whether the individual develops 'expertise' or 'creativity'. This is explored further below.

'Expertise' or 'creativity'? Or 'expertise and creativity'?:

While an overall definition of creativity can be proposed as encompassing 'big-C', 'intermediate-c', localised-c and 'little-c', it still raises the question for some theorists and writers, such as Ellen Winner, as to whether the latter three definitions are actually 'creativity'. Winner (1995 and 2000) makes a valuable contribution in understanding development in suggesting that that there are 4 potential outcomes to giftedness in childhood and adolescence.

1. The 'gift' is developed and the individual produces 'Big C' creativity in adulthood, changing a domain and gaining associated recognition from a field.
2. The 'gift' is developed and the individual reaches the level of 'expertise' in adulthood – high levels of skill, but which do not change a domain, and perhaps are directed at the status quo rather than change.
3. The 'gift' remains latent for a period, and the individual becomes a 'late bloomer', developing and using the gift at some point later in adulthood.
4. The gift is not activated and used for some reason.

Winner implicitly suggests creativity is directed at change, whereas expertise, while valuable, is directed at the status quo, (though Winner's writing does not appear recognise an intermediate level or 'centre-ground' of creativity – only 'Big C' creativity or 'expertise'). Gardner (1993), Simonton (1994), Feldman (1999) each recognise the place of learning domain relevant skills, and the achievement of expertise, as part of the route towards producing domain-changing action and 'creativity'. So, it is appropriate to ask whether the localised creativity in the participant group represents merely 'expertise' or 'creativity' in the sense of changing products, people, services or environments in their local environment.

All the participants in this study spent time in learning domain-relevant skills, the skills necessary for their chosen work. However the work positions they reached, and/or the responsibilities given to these individuals, indicated both achievement of expertise and significant levels of recognition. Equally, their biographies indicated that these are individuals who are not focused on the status quo – their activities are focused on defining, delivering and achieving change in their localised contexts. It is for this reason that the researcher proposes that 'local creativity' in this sample represents something other than expertise and the maintenance of the status quo, rather that their creative work also embraces the delivery of creative activity, flexibility in approach and/or a response to change, as might be expected in creative influencers.

Time taken to learn domain skills and achieve localised creativity:

The time spent by these participants in achieving domain expertise varied. The shortest period between the career starting point and the achievement of recognition for their localised creative achievements was 7 years. The more frequent time span was in excess of 10 years. Both of these measures are less than those cited by Gardner (1993) for

exceptional creative achievement. Though others (e.g. Hayes and Weisburg) have cited 10 years as the minimum apprenticeship required before the exceptional creative individual can deliver exceptional work. Gardner argued that learning domain skills involved one period of work, which was commonly followed by another in which the individual was preparing to go beyond the accepted understanding and knowledge of the domain. It is not be surprising that the time taken to acquire expertise and to deliver localised creativity would be shorter than the estimates for delivering exceptional creativity, and it is very interesting that even local creativity still seems to require a substantial apprenticeship of in excess of 7 years.

Life span development:

Reviewing the experiences of early starter participants (group 1), there is much recognizable in their lives that appears to parallel the theories of Erikson (e.g. 1958) and Levinson (1978 and 1996). For example: We see the relationship with a 'competence', a domain of skill, the identification with it, and the use of this in a workplace (Erikson's life cycle stages 4 - 6). There are the efforts taken to identify a place in which they wish to work and develop their interest, alongside the relationships with partners, spouses and families (Levinson's early adult transition and entry life structure). Two of the most successful individuals in this group, interestingly, framed their motivation in their twenties as focused on the material issues of life – and the very need to do this (as they saw it) in order to provide for themselves and their families. As their domain skills became established and they began to receive recognition for their work, the accounts of this group become more characterised by choices they wished to make and following paths of work more fully of their choosing (Levinson's culminating life structure for early adulthood). The experiences of the late starters (group 2) participants involve similar life structure content, motives and issues. However, as we have seen, they take longer to identify and

become sure of their areas of work, and have the confidence to follow and develop this. In Levinsonian terms, their life structures are less certain, seemingly more prone to difficulties and are subject to more frequent change as part of their effort to place themselves in contexts they are happy with. Significant numbers of the overall participant group experienced events predicted in midlife literature, in line with Levinson's life span developmental theory. The creative activity and outlook of many also changes in some way at midlife and it is possible that these changes are linked in some way to the developmental midlife experiences.

Finally, it is appropriate to address the question as to which of the factors identified are associated with normal development rather than specifically with the development of creative populations. The life span development of both the participant groups could be classified as 'normal'. While their biographies share aspects of the lives of the exceptional creative individual at various times, they do not display the single-minded attention paid by exceptional individuals to their domain of interest (e.g. illustrated by the participants in the work of Roe 1953 and Csikszentmihalyi 1996), that their work is the primary part of their life structure. The lives of this research group suggest a more balanced focus, which would appear to be in accord with Levinson's life structure theories; these expect up to 3 priorities or principal choices to be 'lived-out' by the individual. The accounts of their careers suggest the skillful and flexible application of a domain expertise and also: (1) a wish to personally develop; (2) a wish to contribute to others; (3) an example of the flexibility demanded in a changing environment; (4) illustrative of support and expectations received from the early work environments. The support from influential adults may aid any individual in their work, whether creative or not. The desire to develop personally, and contribute to others may be associated with an influencing orientation. The capacity to respond flexibly in a changing environment may be associated with creativity.

Details of the accounts show parallels with the research on gifted and exceptionally creative populations. In particular: (1) the gain achieved from external recognition and support in the early days of relating to a domain; (2) the value of a nurturing environment, e.g. that provides the practical surroundings to work on and develop a skill; (3) the firming of identity and working practices associated with commitment to and mastery of domain of knowledge and skill; (4) the importance of role models and mentors in providing support and development opportunities. The presence and similarity of these factors suggest that developmental influences on exceptional creativity, giftedness and localised creativity may be related and similar. They may be equally beneficial for normal development.

10.4 Conclusions

This chapter has set the development of local creativity in a wider context, examining the relationship between the factors associated with the local 'creativity' identified in this thesis with other phenomena such as positive development. These other factors were not built in to data collection in this research study (potentially a methodological short-coming). Nevertheless it seemed important to consider, albeit briefly, the relationship between normal development, positive development (such as self-actualisation) and exceptional gifted populations with localised creativity.

Localised Creativity: may be found in the lives of individuals in a local setting where it offers novel, original and useful contributions in that localised context. Successful local creativity seems to be built on many years developing expertise in the domain. The life span development pattern shown by these research participants broadly corresponds with those suggested by writers on normal adult development, such as Erikson (1958) and Levinson (1978 and 1996), (for example in achieving the relationship with a 'competence',

a domain of skill, the identification with it, and the use of this in a workplace (Erikson's life cycle stages 4 - 6). This chapter presents a perspective for a continuum of creativity spanning 'Big C' creativity (domain changing work in receipt of wide-spread recognition) to 'little c' creativity (where creativity is associated with an attitude to daily life and its contents).

Positive psychological functioning and self-actualisation: The participants' accounts of middle age are strongly indicative of well-being and healthy ageing measures developed by Ryff (e.g. 1989). On the basis of admittedly sparse evidence, it appears that a high proportion of this group also demonstrate certain characteristics of self-actualisation. The group is also instrinsically motivated. These findings support the idea that creative activity is associated with healthy development. It may well develop alongside or possibly emerge from – or even contribute to - that state of healthy development.

Giftedness: It is not possible to say whether this group could be defined as 'gifted', as measures of IQ and school performance were not collected. There are some small indications, however, that certain behaviours of some of this group (especially group 1) do parallel behaviours attributed to gifted young people, albeit at a slightly lower level of achievement. The factors found beneficial in the development of the gifted seem to have a number of parallels in the findings of this sample of local creatives.

Flow: Research on flow was based on sampling particular experiences close to when they happened. Therefore, as this research data has been collected on recollections over time rather than on specific experiences, it is not possible to make like-with-like comparisons on this topic. However, it can be said that intrinsic motivation, challenge and skill

development feature prominently in participant accounts and all these are aspects of the flow experience.

Chapter 11 - Conclusions

11.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- 11.2 Present an overview of research findings.
- 11.3 Discuss the limitations of this research.
- 11.4 Consider further research arising from these findings.
- 11.5 Consider the originality of this thesis.

11.2 Overview of Research Findings

11.2.1 Methodological Approach

It has been a great privilege to listen to the life stories of 40 individuals, told with openness and frequently including moving descriptions of the experiences and struggles that they had. No theoretical framework can 'reduce' the uniqueness and individuality of these biographies into tidy or 'complete' representations. In that sense, a research project such as this cannot have a 'neat' conclusion.

The research method adopted for this thesis is not unlike that of researchers such as Levinson (1978, 1996) and Gardner (1993). Levinson worked with rich interview material, and Gardner with biographic material. As here, they have reviewed a large volume of material and sought to find structure and patterns within it. This thesis has intended to convey both aspects of the individual experience as well as common patterns that may appear in large parts of this group.

What follows in this chapter is a summary of research findings identified in chapters 5 - 10. These summaries will describe the patterns found and identify possible conclusions that may be drawn about the nature of everyday creativity and its relationship to life span development and other forms of creativity.

This research project involved participants with a reputation for creativity in a localised context[1]. They were asked to describe their life and an example of their work. These participants may be considered to be creative "influencers" in Gardner's terms (1997 and 1999). This thesis presents a perspective on the development of "localised" or "ordinary" creativity, as distinct from the exceptional creative individual, or the genius that has often been the focus of creativity research, especially biographic research. The research also offers a perspective on the 'lived' experience of creativity as described by the creative individual.

Due to the relatively uncommon nature of research in this area, the data established as well as the findings presented, also constitute an aspect of the originality of this thesis.

The accounts have been examined individually and collectively for patterns and events which indicated the way in which creative activity originated and developed across the participant's life span. In addition, results have been compared with the life span development patterns of exceptional creative individuals to determine in what way, if any, the patterns of these two groups are different.

[1] A 'localised context' contrasts with exceptional creativity, a term usually applied to those with a reputation for creativity across a whole domain of knowledge, or those in receipt of widespread social acclaim.

The primary pattern that emerged from the data analysis is that of two main groups with different developmental histories. First, a group that identified with and developed a skill and/or motivation from the childhood years, took this into adulthood and onwards to middle age – the "Early Starters". Second, a group who, though usually showing an interest in their subsequent creative area in early life, did not make a choice to relate to and develop this until later on in life – the "Later Starters". The accounts of this second group indicate a period of searching before the later development of their subsequently chosen area of activity.

Aspects of this research on everyday creativity can be related to patterns found in the literature on creativity and the gifted. The life stories of the exceptional creative individual commonly, though not exclusively, indicate a relationship with a domain that develops in childhood and is taken through and worked on in adult life (e.g. Ochse 1990). Additionally, there are also research findings that indicate that those individuals who start early, produce earlier and continue through adulthood will be those who contribute more, and who make notable contributions (e.g. Simonton 1988). This parallels the development pattern that was explored in group 1, the early starters. An exploration of a question expressed in literature on the gifted (e.g. Gruber 1986) – how and why does a gift become 'active' can help to understand group 2, the late bloomers or starters. The reported relationship with an area of interest that does not get confirmed in childhood in group 2 – and the subsequent searching for an activity of their choice - allows for an examination of certain developmental perspectives on this question.

The participants' retrospective accounts track a developmental pattern for creative activity over the life span that is reviewed primarily from the orientation of the early and late starters.

The biographic data obtained was also contrasted with research on the exceptional creative individual, giftedness and normal life span development.

11.2.2 Childhood and Adolescence

In this sample interest in the subsequent creative activity often originated in childhood, with the young person finding and relating to a domain of knowledge and skill early. The interest in the chosen area could have been initiated or activated through accidental events, the example of a parent, or the lead of a teacher. However the results of the MBTI, indicating a majority of intuitive-feeling types in the overall sample, suggests that the relationship to creative influencing may originate from an innate talent or a predisposition for this kind of activity. The question then became whether, and how this relationship was maintained into adulthood.

The next step involved events and experiences that supported the young person in having the confidence to build and develop their relationship with the domain. If they received support for their choice as an individual, i.e. acknowledgement of their choice as a person, or specific support for their choice of a domain from either parents or schools (e.g. through practical support in learning) it appeared much more likely that the relationship became firmer or grounded, and continued into adulthood. If the young person did not receive (or perceive) support, or only received support in generalised ways, then it was less probable that they had the confidence to confirm their relationship with the chosen domain or the motivation to continue this work into their adult life. The presence of influential adults, teachers or role models during childhood and adolescence to support and act as resources in the participant's relationship to the domain of interest, and this generally appeared key to its subsequent development. Bloom (1985) also found that parental example (e.g. via their own interests)

and practical support (in the location and involvement of appropriate teachers) were keys to development.

Exceptional Creative Individuals: the categories that emerged from this participant group show some parallels to those commonly observed in biographic research on the exceptional creative individual although it must be stressed that these are clearly different research populations and this is not a direct comparison. These categories included: the origins of creative work; the social class and occupation of parents; birth order; parental influences; handicap and illness; bereavement; schooling and education; and the presence of influential adults. Both the participant groups and research on the exceptional creative individual suggest a number of common experiences in the first three of these categories. Experiences are more varied in the remaining factors.

- Parental influences varied. Those who received more specific support also tended to be those who moved on and developed their relationship with a domain of knowledge and skill more confidently and directly than those who did not.
- On the whole, participants in group 1 undertook more schooling for longer than those in group 2. They described more positive experiences than those in group 2, and appeared to be able to cope with negative experiences more readily, or at least 'convert them' into something they could interpret positively. For group 1 this pattern of experiences seemed to have begun to reinforce their choice of and relationship with a domain and/or their motivation for it.
- Some people had physical disability and illness. The reported experiences of the exceptional creative individual suggested that this can be a source of isolation, which helps focus attention on a domain of activity. This did not seem to be the case for individuals

who were disabled or had been ill in this research group. More commonly, the experiences appeared to contribute to the content or approach in their eventual work.

- The participant group appeared to have experienced lower levels of bereavement than that found with the exceptional creative individual and in the population at large (Eisenstadt 1978). The impact of bereavement is not clear – yet theories on the exceptional creative individual suggested its presence may form a pressure or driver that stimulates working and eventually creative activity. Experience of bereavement does not appear to be a significant factor in this participant group.

The researcher proposes that the overlapping nature of the experiences reported in this participant group with those of the exceptional creative individual and with those classified as gifted suggests that the development of these groups may all be affected by similar environmental influences. It also suggested that creative development may be considered on a continuum from 'little-c' through local to exceptional and gifted.

11.2.3 Early Adulthood

Domain identification: In what ways do 'ordinary' creative individuals locate and develop a domain of creative activity and how does this compare with the practices of 'exceptional' creative individuals?

The majority of participants in group 1, the early starters, had made a clear choice on what work to become engaged in by the end of the Early Adult Transition, in university-level education. The focus, the energy of their efforts was to discover where they could or wished to become engaged in this work. This took time, and initial choices were not always successful on a first attempt. In contrast to the exceptional creative individual, even with this

choice made, the participants in this sample took more time to find an appropriate work location.

During early adulthood in group 2, the later starters, participants were generally still asking both what work to become engaged in, and where. Some participants chose work as a possible option with the intention of using the experience to clarify where they might eventually focus their attention. Levinson (e.g. 1996) defines a period of life with structural uncertainty as a 'transition', but commonly of relatively short duration (e.g. 4 – 5 years). These results indicate that many group 2 participants remained in a transitionary state in early adulthood longer than Levinson would have predicted. This extended period of uncertainty had consequences in terms of a delayed career start-date, and delayed opportunity to concentrate on learning the knowledge and skills of a domain.

By the closing of the twenties significantly more of group 1 participants had located their domain of eventual creative work than in group 2. This means that the pattern in group 1 is of having achieved a focus of work faster enabling them to concentrate on the development and mastery of domain-relevant skills. Over half of group 2 participants had either not located the domain of their eventual creative activity, or were working in a domain from which they would make a 'step change' to this creative activity. Those who had located and were learning their domain relevant skills were further towards achieving domain mastery and/or creativity skills.

Motivation: A similar pattern also holds in the area of motivation. In early adulthood two thirds of group 1 participants described an intrinsic motivation for their area of work, in contrast to just over ten percent of group 2. The majority within group 2 at this time

demonstrated a motivation for another area of work, unclear motivation, or extrinsic motivation focused on the external aspects of the work. This pattern in group 2 suggests it is likely to lead to less creative work, or a focus on other aspects than the work itself, due to this reduced or lower levels of motivation.

Change skills: It was clear from participants' stories that the majority of group 1 participants and half of group 2 participants were working in contexts where the introduction of new and novel work was expected, and/or the skills for achieving change were taught as part of the skills for working in that context. It seems that many of this participant group were working in locations that were open to or actually nurtured aspects of creative work, i.e. the production and introduction of new, novel and appropriate changes into their context. It is not clear how atypical this was at that time.

Pre-midlife circumstances: Prior to the midlife decade there was a further increase in both groups, of those settled in the domain of their creative work. There was also an increase in the number of participants who reported intrinsic motivation for their work – yet the number within group 1 was still higher than in group 2. By this point the majority of group 2 participants had found a domain of activity and intrinsic motivation for it (albeit later than the pattern demonstrated in group 1). The participants in group 2 were 'catching up' with participants in group 1 and often by a different route. Group 1 participants clarified their motivation and moved towards work influenced by this choice. In contrast, many group 2 participants appeared to use work experience to clarify their motivation and then move into a domain of work that became the place of their creative activity.

At this time, there was also an increase, in both groups, of individuals demonstrating creative skills – though the numbers were higher in group 1 than in group 2. The proportion of individuals working in settings where change was normal, and where the skills for introducing change are taught, also increased in both groups. Again, these numbers are higher in group 1 than in group 2.

Influential adults: More participants in group 1 reported experiences of being influenced by adults and had more of these experiences.

For group 1 participants the most common pattern was of influential adults who opened up perceptions of what was contained in work, or was possible in work.

Group 2 participants described contributions from influential adults that focused on an understanding, or changed understanding of who they might be as individuals, a fundamental change in their self-understanding. This suggests that they may have been still searching for that understanding about themselves in this time period.

The researcher proposes that these two distinct patterns are not unexpected. For example, where group 1 participants had found their domain of work, their focus is on what they may need to develop that activity, e.g. working practices. Group 2 participants, with a longer period of 'searching', were still resolving questions about who they were as individuals, or where they wish to attach their work efforts.

Changes of domain: Where group 1 participants changed or moved work domains, in each case this change contributed to the eventual creative work. The changes of domain made by

group 2 participants at this time were largely based on some form of uncertainty in work or work choice.

Changes of field: Participants in group 1 who worked in two or more 'fields' all reported reasons for these changes associated with gaining experience that supported their intrinsic motivation for the work they had chosen to do. Participants in group 2 who worked in two or more 'fields' reported reasons based on their changing their minds about career course, or for extrinsic reasons like promotion or career status.

11.2.4 Midlife

All participants report at least some experiences predicted by the midlife literature. Group 1 participants report more of the changes predicted by Jaques (1965).

In reviewing changes to employment there was a strong pattern in group 1 participants of either initiating the changes themselves, or at the very least responding to them as a natural extension of what they were already doing. More of group 2 seemed to react to them.

Group 2 participants show a much higher level of considering what actions or behaviours to devote themselves to in future. This appeared to be in line with group 2 finding their creative work 'late' and 'reacting' to changes in external events.

This group also displayed changes to creative activity at midlife predicted by Jacques (1965), (i.e. that creative work might cease or dry up, the capacity might show itself for the first time, there may be a change in the quality or content of work, or a change in work method).

11.2.5 Middle Age

Participants reported on-going creative activity in 'middle age'. The reported changes to work were largely internal in nature involving a sense of confidence, skill and improvement in the process used in working with others. There were some indications of participants being more open to the needs of a social group (e.g. a group of trainees) which would be in line with the expectations for Erikson's seventh stage of Generativity vs. Stagnation (e.g. 1958).

Over half of the forty participants planned further specific changes to their work. There were indications that the plans of this group were less specific in nature than those found in the work patterns of the exceptional creative individual (Csikszentmihalyi 1996).

There was little evidence of the so-called "late life style". The late life style is characterised by: (1) An expression of deeper thoughts and feelings, with greater economy of means. (2) Simplicity and depth. (3) A focus on questions, issues, associated with 'meaning' in life and spiritual affairs. (4) It may transcend current conventions, and use alternate approaches (Munsterberg 1984 and Simonton 1994.) No clear indication could be seen by the researcher in the reports of this group of the late life style. However, the calmer and clearer focus from both participant groups, and the greater degrees of comfort with themselves and their work is indicative of point 3 above, and of measures of positive psychological functioning proposed by Ryff (e.g. 1989).

11.2.6 Additional Perspectives

Analysis of the data suggests there appears to be little relationship between gender, occupation, age and style and the early and later starter development pattern of the local creative in this sample.

The experiences of the early adulthood phase of these everyday creatives potentially show certain interesting parallels with the reported experiences of the gifted (e.g. Subotnik and Arnold 1994). Specifically, the findings associated with giftedness suggest the development and activation of a childhood gift in adulthood is subject to many influences e.g. the availability of mentors, and can reach both a positive and negative outcome. Subotnik and Arnold have assembled longitudinal studies of giftedness that illustrate the struggles and the efforts associated with a gift being utilised in adulthood This aspect of talent development is rarely considered in creativity literature, e.g. Freeman (1993), and may illustrate one of the potential contributions of further research on 'intermediate-creativity'.

The researcher has argued, in section 10.3 of chapter 10, that there are grounds for considering creativity as a continuum from 'Big C' creativity, through to 'little c' creativity, with 'intermediate C' creativity, and 'localised creativity' occupying the 'middle ground' between the two extremes. He suggests that there are grounds for research to further develop the understanding of creativity as it may appear in this middle ground, possibly on its route to potentially being 'domain changing' creativity.

The findings from the midlife period, and the middle age period in particular, suggested that the differences between the two participant groups narrow with time – that they grow closer together with age. There are indications that they show some characteristics of positive

development and self-actualization. In this context, that of an examination of 'little-c' creativity, this suggests that this phenomenon maybe part of a larger developmental pattern involving identity, and constructive, positive and healthy ageing.

In summary the research suggests that there is a creativity continuum from everyday and 'little-c' creativity, through local and intermediate creativity, to 'Big-C' and exceptional creativity. In addition it suggests that some of the key developmental factors highlighted in research on the gifted seem to have parallels in work on the exceptional creative individual, and in this sample. It may be that some of the factors identified, such as parental support for the area of interest and high expectations for the child, are beneficial development factors in all populations, not just the creative or gifted - and this is worthy of further exploration or research. A large part of this sample did not settle on their work area until later in life, in contrast to exceptional creatives. While there appear to be developmental influences (such as a lower level of parental support) on their experiences it is not clear if this is in any way associated with the fact that the sample is composed of influencers, a group who may benefit from having a variety of life experiences prior to settling into their chosen career.

11.3 Limitations of This Research

Type of research: This research is biographic in nature. It is reliant on an individual's recall and memory generally, and their willingness to recall and communicate relevant information. The story-teller may also attempt to communicate a particular motive or point of view in addition to, or in place of the facts sought in the research context (e.g. that they have had a fulfilling and successful life). As a result, research of this type is susceptible to having

material needed by the study omitted or distorted because of these factors. Given this background, why and in what ways can these findings be relied upon?

Biographic research is acknowledged as one of the primary routes for creativity research (Mayer 1999). Biographic research – whether through the work of a biographer or the autobiographical reflection of a participant - is susceptible to distortion in similar ways. There are three forms of safeguards that were applied to minimise the risks of distortion described above.

1. First, alertness within the research interview framework to facts or aspects of the communicated biography that appear to contradict the overall picture being communicated.
2. Second, the use of multiple cases as a means of assembling data from a wide range of sources (i.e. people), and not relying on one participant alone. If similar patterns are displayed across a wider group then these may be indications that the research is examining something over and above the factors of an individual story.
3. Third, after Gedo and Gedo (1990) and Feldman (1999), biographic research is seen as a valuable means for establishing models and theories that may then be tested via other research routes. The limitations of time associated with Ph.D. work and a study of this type have not allowed for other research methods to be used in this case (e.g. survey work to test experiences of a wider group). This becomes an opportunity for follow-up research.

Sample structure: The sample in this research project was not random but selected to meet certain predetermined criteria. This quota approach reflected the practicalities associated with

finding participants. Such an approach has been used in prior work such as the Terman sample (Terman 1925; Holahan and Sears 1995; Csikszentmihalyi 1996.)

Data-gathering: The primary focus of data-gathering in this project has been open interviews; though an interview guide was used, this meant the content of the material discussed was determined by participants. Chapter 10 illustrated, (e.g. section 10.2.4) that the lack of other data, such as academic records, has led to limitations in some of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study, e.g. in whether or not these participants may be 'gifted'.

Time and resources: Ph.D. research is limited both in time and the resources available to the researcher. The use of forty participants will not provide research results that may be generalised – nor was it intended that they should. The qualitative nature of this study had the goal of articulating a particular area of information and experience, so this could be used as a basis for further exploration of this field. It would be interesting to look at other comparison groups but the restrictions of time and resources associated with a PhD study meant it was not possible to study any contrasting group, though the biographic data gathered from exceptional creative individuals has provided a framework for considering some of these reported experiences. [2]

Occupational Focus: The focus of this research has been limited to a particular style of work - that of creative influencers, working in three different settings (e.g. salaried organisational work, self employed working for organisations, and people who work one-to-one with others).

[2] There are precedents in not using control groups in research of this kind, e.g. Terman 1925. This is an acknowledged restriction in studies of this nature (e.g. Subotnik and Arnold 1994: p14/5).

Further research could explore the patterns in other occupational groups, e.g artists or managers.

Projection: This focus of research has involved an area of study (the work of 'influencers') that relates to the occupational category of the researcher. This source of potential bias in this study was examined in Chapter 3, section 3.4.8. In summary, the researcher believes that he did not adversely affect the results for the following reasons:

1. The participants involved were generally doing work involving skills not used by the researcher, and in locations not known by the researcher.
2. The background of the researcher in 'action research' consulting in a business context has led to a broad experience of data gathering by interview. This work has involved a specific brief to understand information in the terms used by the interviewee, not imposed by the interviewer.
3. Additionally, his training and experience in counselling and psychotherapeutic situations also provides him with experience and specific methods (described in the research method chapter) for 'staying separate' from the information offered by the participants.

11.4 Further Research

As described above in section 11.3, the findings of this research suggest the need for further exploration and evaluation of creative development over time, of local creativity and of the development of creative influencers by other research routes and with other participant groups. For example:

- Additional data sources: This research could be replicated and expanded upon using additional data sources, e.g. schooling, IQ data, and interviews with others, such as

parents, spouses or colleagues. This would allow the potential confirmation of findings and/or the identification of further contributing factors.

- Testing the results of this research in participant groups within discrete time/age periods, rather than a whole-life study, (e.g. taking the four time periods used by this study and examining only individual periods.) This could have the benefit of examining experiences and influences of these time periods in greater detail.
- Influential adults: The contribution of influential adults in the early adulthood period, i.e. of influencing work patterns or contributing to a firmer understanding of personal identity warrants further exploration and confirmation.
- Changes in middle age: This research has documented that there is a comparative lack of understanding about the changes to creative work that occur post midlife. There is scope, therefore, for research that examines these changes over and above those of productivity and social recognition that occupies a large proportion of existing research on this time period. (The researcher is structuring and planning a further biographic study in this area to follow this work.)
- Midlife experiences: The use of another research route, such as a survey, to examine the extent of midlife experiences that occur in different class and occupational groups of the population. This would have the advantage of investigating in a more controlled way whether and how these experiences relate to education, occupation and income sector etc.
- The relationship between midlife experiences and changes in creative activity: further research may also explore the nature and extent of any causal links between midlife experiences and changes to creative activity.

11.5 The Originality of This Research.

This research includes the following elements of originality:

1. **Development patterns in localised creativity:** The focus is on understanding developmental patterns in a group of individuals with a reputation for creativity in a localised context, rather than exceptional creative individuals in receipt of widespread social acclaim. In this way, it offers a perspective on the development of 'ordinary' or 'everyday' creativity.
2. **"Intermediate creativity":** The illustration of the patterns outlined in point 1 above also creates a case for further research on the nature of 'intermediate creativity'.
3. **Occupational group:** The focus on an occupational type (influencers) that is one of the four recently proposed by Gardner (1997), offers an exploration of the type of developmental influences that may occur within this particular under-researched group of creatives.
4. **Research method and population:** The application of a standard method of research (biographic interviewing) has been applied to a new research population. In this context, the data established on two types of local creative influencers in this research is also an aspect of its originality.
5. **Focus on women:** Given that the primary focus of creativity research is on males, this research provides some additional data on the experiences of women.
6. **Creative development:** This thesis has examined the development of domain skills, motivation and change skills over time, though the research focus of this thesis has been on the effect of lifespan and environmental influences on their development.

Appendix 1 - References

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Appendix 2 - Description of Participants:

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
1	F	59	**Composer** This individual had a career in business in a multi-national company for approximately 18 – 20 years prior to leaving this domain she reached the level of country chief executive. She introduced a particular business into a number of countries (e.g. Australia), frequently for the first time within a local market. She returned to music as her domain of work in the second half of her forties, relearning and developing the skills necessary to compose music. She wrote two musicals specifically for children[1]. These were staged initially by a school for the performing arts. One was chosen for funding by a local authority and used as project for local children.
2	F	55	**Management consultant and writer** This individual has written a number of books published publicly and privately, on subjects ranging from biography and organisational development. She has specialised in working with public-sector and not-for-profit organisations as a management consultants, and has worked internationally. She has developed a specific process for resolving issues of team and organisational development. Outputs of her consulting work have been taken up by the United Nation High Commission for Refugees.
3	M	46	**Counsellor** This individual took up counselling work in his late thirties, while maintaining a work career in industry. He has co-founded a therapeutic centre in a local town with a prime goal of making counselling and psychotherapy available to the general community/population, not solely those commonly seen as its focus group (educated, middle class.) He has a reputation for working with clients to achieve profound change in their lives.
4	M	55	**Management consultant and writer** Until his early fifties this individual worked in a major industrial corporation in human resources work. He formulated and pioneered two major changes – a process for the involvement of staff in major organisational change, and the introduction of performance-related pay for the first time in this industry area. After leaving organisational life he has published management education material, including two books via a major publisher. One of these books was nominated for a national management book award.
5			**(Withdrew from participation.)**

[1] Music written specifically for children is relatively rare. There are only approximately 80 musicals in existence from this genre – the norm is for adult work to be adapted for use by children.

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
6	M	47	**Management consultant, coach and trainer** This individual has moved through a number of occupational areas within the domain of the electronics and engineering industry. Commencing as an engineer, he moved through sales, sales management, general management and training. He has held two posts as managing director within this industry. He has a reputation for achieving spectacular business growth and performance which was adopted as a 'model' by more than one company. His reputation also embraces the management methods he uses to develop staff and business performance together.
7	F	46	**Senior manager in a finance organisation** This manager has a reputation for achieving change involving ways never previously used by the company, or methods never before conceived as *possible* by the organisation. Prior to her current role she worked in the management of corporate training. She introduced methods focused on business needs and goals never previously seen in this context. She received national recognition for some of this work (e.g. partnerships with a university in training work).
8	M	52	**Organisational consultant and trainer** This individual has a national reputation for work in career management and outplacement activity. He has introduced a number of developments, including the principles for use of 'employee assistance' telephone lines, for the first time in UK industry.
9	M	54	**Writer (Youth worker)** The creative work of this individual has been focused on his activities *outside* normal paid employment. He has been involved in the scouting movement all his childhood and adult life. Since his late thirties he has combined this with his love of writing. For a number of years, he wrote comedy sketches for 'Gang Shows', a genre of entertainment which dates back over 60 years. His sketches have been acknowledged nationally, and are reproduced by other scout districts/areas.
10	F	59	**Yoga Teacher** This individual was referred to the author because of her use of yoga, a *physical* discipline, for the treatment and healing of *psychological* issues. There may, however, be an additional perspective to consider. Her early life was spent as a refugee in World War 2 Europe. These experiences clearly influenced her significantly and, under Gardner's definition of "introspector", her creative work has been working on and involves understanding these experiences, and regaining her own health.
11	M	47	**Management consultant and trainer** This individual has received acknowledgement for contributing to

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			major systemic change in organisations. This work has moved client organisations from 'old' ways of structuring and working, to new forms of operation.
12	M	47	**Youth worker** Similarly to participant 9, this individual has been connected with the scouting movement all his childhood and adult life. In his early thirties he established a reputation for creating a functional local/district organisation where one had previously not been considered viable. He has maintained this work, in different forms, most commonly in finding ways in which one-off events, or district organisations can be operated where existing ways of operating indicate this would not be viable.
13	M	55	**Outdoor pursuits teacher** This individual has received acknowledgement in his twenties, and in his forties for designing new and novel ways for physical education in different contexts. Most recently he has used outdoor pursuits as a means for highlighting and changing students' learning methods on an MBA programme. He has received acknowledgement for this work nationally and internationally.
14	M	52	**Trainer, poet, artist.** This individual was referred to the author for his work across this range of activity. He took up poetry and art in his early forties. His work as a poet has been published, and he has been employed as a part-time teacher on courses teaching both poetry and art (word and image).
15	M	53	**Architect, writer, business manager and trainer** This individual's reputation was initially established in architecture, dating from his mid-to-late twenties. It has moved through different forms and contexts. Since his early forties he has been working across several domains. He has received acknowledgement nationally as a writer on the subject of the changing nature of careers.
16	F	59	**Trainer** This individual has worked in training roles since her early 30's, moving into management and organisational training in her early 40s'. She has achieved recognition for introducing induction training into a major UK corporation on the basis of an international study conducted by her. This training had never been undertaken in the 60+ years of the corporation's existence. Additionally, she has worked overseas. She achieved recognition for her training methods in communicating the need and benefit of shifting local management style in a middle-eastern international company.
17	F	59	**Trainer and counsellor** This individual has received acknowledgement in the last five plus years for supporting a change in public and National Health Service

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			perception and treatment for people with a particular disability. This has involved expanding the understanding of the needs of these patients, and changing the methods through which they are treated and supported. It has been achieved by a combination of influencing, education and training of those involved.
18	F	55	**Academic and Artist/Sculptor** The career of this individual in the main part of her working life was as an academic in the field of anthropology. She achieved recognition for her work overseas on tracking and recording the life- and family-histories of indigenous people. In parallel to her work as an anthropologist this individual has worked on and developed her artistic skills throughout her adult life. She describes her interest in people via art and anthropology as a common theme, a wish to see in its deepest senses what makes people what they are. She now works primarily as an artist and sculptor and has achieved public recognition via her exhibitions.
19	M	49	**Management consultant and trainer** This individual has worked nationally and internationally in the field of marketing for over 25 years. He has received acknowledgement and a reputation for being the person behind a number of major marketing campaigns that have changed public perceptions of the products being sold. He defines, as pivotal to this work, the exploration of the 'problems' being resolved, (i.e. 'problem-finding' within the field of creativity), and commonly significantly redefines the questions and projects he works on in order to achieve these outcomes.
20	F	48	**Management consultant and trainer** Similar in background to participant number 16, this individual has worked in organisational training since her early 30s'. Her reputation is centred particularly on customer service matters, and she has been acknowledged for her ability to create methods and settings within which these matters can be examined and changed in a major public company.
21	M	49	**Management consultant and trainer** This individual has a background in teaching and acting during his twenties and early thirties. He is currently receiving recognition by a major UK corporation for his counselling and coaching skills in helping managers achieve personal change.
22	M	59	**Management consultant and trainer** This individual's reputation is based on two distinct domains – management consulting and acting. Taking the latter first, he was a founder member of the National Youth Theatre, and has acted as a spare-time activity for all his adult life. He has a regional reputation for his work, and is approached regularly by theatre companies. In his organisational work he was one of, if not the first individuals in the UK to devise and introduce methods for a novel form of management feedback not previously used in this country. His

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			reputation for this work still generates activity for him, 15+ years later.
23	M	55	**Managing Director** This individual ranks amongst the UK's top psychologists and has introduced changes and developments to psychological testing that are now considered to be the benchmark in that particular field.
24	M	51	**Outplacement Consultant and Trainer** This individual was recommended by one of the other participants for his work in 1:1 and organisational outplacement and career management activity.
25	F	50	**Psychotherapist** Recommended by one of the other participants, this individual has worked in counselling and psychotherapeutic work for over a decade and has a reputation for creativity and major change within that domain.
26	M	58	**Outplacement Consultant and Trainer** This individual was recommended by one of the other participants for his work in 1:1 and organisational outplacement and career management activity. He has been acknowledged nationally amongst those working in the outplacement field for his ability to design and implement training which communicates and addresses often subtle issues associated with inter-personal relations.
27	F	45	**Company Director** This individual is a company director of a small management consultancy and training company. The company has a reputation for the achievement of people and organisational change, and this individual is credited as a significant influence on the standards and methods it uses.
28	F	53	**Outplacement Consultant and Trainer** This individual is credited as co-author/designer outplacement and personal development training material and courses.
29	M	50	**Church of England Vicar** This individual has an international reputation for his teaching and training work in the area of mysticism and creativity. He is credited with making often esoteric material practical and communicable. He has also established an organisation dedicated to contemplative Christianity that now operates in 23 countries internationally.
30	M	53	**Psychotherapist and Photographer** This individual's reputation was initially as a photographer (in his twenties and thirties). He achieved recognition from organisations (e.g. the BBC) for his ability to prepare often complex and technically demanding images of unusual items/subjects. He also achieved regional and national recognition for his photography in Spain and Eastern Scotland.

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			In his early forties he suffered from chronic life-threatening illness which took him nearly a decade to recover from, and which prevented him continuing his photographic career. He has used that experience as part of his decision to undertake and practice psychotherapeutic work.
31	M	49	**Director – New Product Development** This individual has worked in a marketing role for one of the UK's leading consumer manufacturing companies for over 20 years. He was responsible for studying how certain overseas countries produced products handled by his organisation and (on the basis of very little information) working out how these might be practically and profitably manufactured in the UK. He also pioneered a particular form of market research that allowed his company to gain information on what products may be wanted and acceptable to their customer market place. His company is a market-leader in its field, and his work is credited for having created that position.
32	M	53	**Advertising Director** This individual is a 'Creative Director' in one of the world's leading advertising agencies. His work with them has lasted over 30 years. He has been responsible for both agency business growth and the development of new styles of advertising. He has won awards for his work. He has also worked with the agency to create new ways of managing business required by international customers (never previously used before) which has created levels of agency business growth never seen before.
33	M		**Chief Executive – Public-Sector Organisation** This individual headed a small public sector organisation seeking to bring an international perspective to a particular form of humanitarian work. Traditionally representative organisations in this field were seen as occasionally radical or impractical by politicians working with a whole country perspective. This man created an international forum through which the organisation's work on this issue could be drawn together, developed a method of consensus working which allowed a holistic view to be communicated to governments and communicated it to government representatives in a manner they could commonly work with. Additionally he developed understanding of certain problems which governments had not been able to do, which were subsequently taken up by the United Nations Organisation.
34	M	51	**Senior Human Resources Manager** This individual had worked extensively on human resource issues in an R&D environment. He saw some of his primary contributions as the development of a team of staff skilled and equipped to support and lead the R&D environment through time periods that involved conflict and high levels of change. More recently he has had to seek out and pioneer particular forms of working which increase organisation effectiveness.
35	M	50	**Senior Organisational Development Manager** This individual worked for approximately 20 years as part of a consulting group associated with one of the country's leading business schools. He brought a particular model and perspective to organisation

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			development work. His work, for example, is credited as being a significant influence on the transformation of one of the country's leading financial institutions.
36	F	58	**Singer and Voice Teacher** This individual combined a talent and love of singing with an interest in the development of particular groups in society over time. This led to her establishing a reputation for particular forms of songs which was reflected both in concert appearances and records released. She developed this work into a particular form of voice teaching which was aimed at individuals both understanding and developing their concept of who they were.
37	M	52	**Osteopath and Teacher/Trainer** While initially developing work as an osteopath this individual learnt, and then subsequently taught methods of combining osteopathy with other forms of health diagnosis and treatment. He has also developed a specialism in applying these methods to a particular form of health disorder as an alternative to the common forms of drug treatment. He has been involved in teaching both forms of work over a number of years.
38	F	53	**Trainer and Management Consultant** This individual has worked in different domains over time. For a number of years her primary reputation was for the development and preparation of distance learning material. More recently she has been working with new forms of training technology which aim to support individuals in identifying and building on their personal motivation as a route for career and personal development, and the use of non-violent communication.
39	F	53	**Writer and journalist** This individual worked on two of Britain's leading newspapers as a journalist during her twenties and thirties. She subsequently became a freelance journalist and writer. She has specialized in writing about a particular subject area and communicating that to the general public in a manner not previously achieved. She did this in book form, and has published biographically oriented books that have received widespread recognition in their subject area.
40	F	50	**Organisation Development Consultant** This individual has worked in two related domains over her working career and has brought the skills and practices of one into the other. She has a reputation for developing the content and quality of working practices in her work context, and more recently authoring and implementing training material not previously used in that location. She is currently working on the development and use of new working practices in her work context.
41	F	58	**Trainer and Management Consultant** This individual has worked in three domains over her work career, and has succeeded in bringing common perspectives from each to help and support what is now her work. She has a reputation for different forms of activity, particularly for the development of a form of hospice care in

Number	Gender	Age	Background and brief description of work area:
			this country.

Appendix 3 – Data and analysis on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator

1 Introduction

Chapter 1, section 1.2 and Chapter 3, section 3.4.4 refer to how the original conception of the thesis was to examine changes to creative activity in the midlife period and middle age. The shift of focus of the thesis to a whole life perspective, together with results primarily indicative of social system influences, led the researcher to omit these results from the main body of the thesis and include this material as an appendix. This appendix contains:

2 Background on the MBTI.

3 Data from participants.

4 MBTI results across group 1 and 2.

5 Intuitive Types.

6 Intuitive Feeling Types.

7 Different styles of creativity across 'type'.

8 MBTI results across the 3 broad occupational categories.

2 Background to the MBTI

In addition to the interview, all participants filled in a personality inventory, the MBTI.

- This instrument is derived from Jung's Theory of Psychological Type.
- It was completed by participants in accordance with the processes outlined by MBTI user material.
- The inclusion of the MBTI as a data-gathering instrument was initially speculative. The MBTI claims to offer data that can be related to an individual's approach to creative activity and the nature of changes that may be experienced in the mid-life period. The researcher's intention was to examine participant data within the context

of these theoretical claims and to see if psychological type was related to particular patterns of creative development.

3 Data from participants

Table A3.1: MBTI Scores and Types:

The score lines of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator for each participant are:

Participant	Reported Type	Score	"Agreed Type"
1	INFP	I = 39; N = 43; F = 17; P = 23	INFP
2	INFP	I = 11; N = 21; F = 21; P = 33.	INFP
3	ENFP	E = 15; N = 7; F = 3; P = 29	ESFP
4	INTJ	I = 37; N = 51; T = 27; J = 33	INTP
5	(Withdrew)		
6	ENFP	E = 11; N = 47; F = 15; P = 33	ENFP
7	ESTP	E = 7; S = 13; T = 41; P = 5	ENTP
8	ENFP	E = 3; N = 33; F = 33; P = 41	ENFP
9	ISTJ	I = 15; S = 3; T = 19; J = 21	ISTJ
10	(See note below)		
11	INFP	I = 5; N = 21; F = 13; P = 23.	INFP
12	ESFP	E = 1; S = 17; F = 0; P = 21	ENFP
13	INFP	I = 25; N = 29; F = 37; P = 27	ENTP
14	ISFP	I = 5; S = 13; F = 7; P = 33.	ISFP
15	ENTJ	E = 23; N = 15; T = 7; J = 3.	ENFP
16	ENFJ	E = 17; N = 7; F = 15; J = 27	ESFJ
17	ENFJ	E = 37; N = 31; F = 27; J = 27	ESFJ
18	ENFP	E = 13; N = 35; F = 7; P = 35	ENFP
19	INTP	I = 17; N = 1; T = 9; P = 3	INTP
20	ENTJ	E = 51; N = 3; T = 3; J = 21	ENTJ
21	ENFJ	E = 25; N = 27; F = 7; J = 3	ENFJ

Appendix 3 – Data and analysis from the Myers Briggs Type Indicator

Participant	Reported Type	Score	"Agreed Type"
22	INFJ	(See notes below table.)	INFJ
23	INFP	(See notes below table.)	INFP
24	ENFJ*	E = 63; N = 49; F = 35; J = 9.	ENFJ
25	ENFJ	E = 25; N = 33; F = 11; J = 15	ENFJ
26	ESTJ*	E = 21; S = 15; T = 14; J = 21	ESTJ
27	ENFJ	E = 5; N = 47; F = 19; J = 15.	INFJ
28	INFJ*	I = 41; N = 43; F = 7; J = 1	INFJ
29	ENFP	(See notes below table.)	ENFP
30	ENFP	E = 7; N = 21; F = 25; P = 27.	ENFP
31	ENFJ*	E = 14; N = 18; F = 12; J = 18.	ENFJ
32	INFP	I = 39; N = 47; F = 29; P = 29.	(See note below)
33	ENTP	E = 27; N = 47; T = 17; P = 45.	ENTP
34	INTP	I = 27; N = 33; T = 5; P = 23.	INTP
35	ENTP	E = 29; N = 35; T = 53; P = 37.	ENTP
36	ENFJ#	E = 13; N = 21; F = 19; J = 19.	ENFJ
37	ENFJ	E = 29; N = 27; f = 27; J = 25.	ENFJ
38	INTP*	I = 27; N = 47; T = 5; P = 55.	INFP
39	INFJ	I = 5; N = 19; F = 25; J = 7.	INFP
40	ENTJ*	E = 7; N = 19; T = 45; J = 13.	ENTJ
41	ENTP*	E = 3; N = 29; T = 37; P = 31.	ENTP

"Agreed type" is the participant's self-assessed type. In some cases this was not the same as the scored type.

Notes:

- Participants marked with an "*" had taken the MBTI as part of other training. They did not repeat the questionnaire for this research. Their earlier completion had been administered under conditions advised by the MBTI distributors, and participants reported themselves still in agreement with their reported type.

- Participant 10 declined to complete the questionnaire.
- Participants 22 and 23 had each done detailed research work connected with the MBTI and Jungian Type. As a result of this they reported themselves as so familiar with its structure that they believed they had passed a point where they could complete the questionnaire as a standard participant could. They both advised the researcher of what they considered to be their 'type' within the theory structure.
- Participant 29 and 32 did not respond to contacts from the researcher after completing research interviews. (In both cases the researcher believes that this was due to pressure of work – a factor adversely influencing response rates in creative individuals, described by Csikszentmihalyi 1996.) Participant 29 was familiar with the MBTI theory and structure and reported that his scored and agreed type had been 'ENFP' on prior occasions. The score line of participant 32 is strong or distinct enough to be described as "clear choice" in MBTI theory. These 'types' have been incorporated in the overall results.
- Participant 36 (marked with an "#") is visually impaired. Her questionnaire was completed with the support of a worker trained in working with the visually impaired in their documentary work.

Examining these results, and some of the changes that took place between 'reported' and 'agreed' type:

- 28 agree reported type (70 % of group.)
- 10 alter one letter of reported type as a result of feedback. (25 % of group.)
- 2 alter two letters of reported type as a result of feedback. (5 % of group.)
- This pattern of changes is generally as anticipated in Myers and McCaulley (1985: p171). (Where a letter preference is changed this is normally in scales where the original preference was low.)

Table A3.2: Overall Participant Type Tabulated by MBTI Type Table:

'Agreed-type', or the type assessed by participants as accurate and applying to them has been used in this table.

ISTJ Youth worker / M / (9)	ISFJ	INFJ Trainer / M / (22) Co. director / F / (27) Trainer / F / (28)	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP Trainer / M / (14)	INFP Composer / F / (1) *Writer/trainer / F / (2)* *Trainer / M / (11)* Mng Director / M / (23) *Adv exec / M / (32)* Trainer/writer / F / (38) *Writer / F / (39)*	INTP Writer/mgt cons./ M / (4) *Trainer / M / (19)* Snr Mngr / M / (34)
ESTP	ESFP Counsellor / M / (3)	ENFP *Trainer / M / (6)* Trainer / M / (8) Youth leader/ M / (12) *Architect etc / M / (15)* *Sculptor / F / (18)* *Vicar / M / (29)* Psychotherapist / M / (30)G	ENTP *Snr Mngr / F / (7)* *Teacher / M / (13)* *C. Ex. / M / (33)* *OD Consult. / M / (35)* *Trainer / F / (41)*
ESTJ Trainer / M / (26)	ESFJ Trainer / F / (16) Trainer / F / (17)	ENFJ Trainer / M / (21) *Trainer / M / (24)* Psychotherapist / F / (25) *Director / M / (31)* *Singer/teacher / F / (36)* *Osteopath /teacher / M / (37)*	ENTJ Trainer / F / (20) *OD Consultant / F / (40)*

(Note: participants in *italic* are 'group 1', participants in plain text, 'group 2'.)

Table A3.3: MBTI – estimated percentage, by Type, within the UK population:

ISTJ 13.7%	ISFJ 12.7%	INFJ 1.7%	INTJ 1.4%
ISTP 6.4%	ISFP 6.1%	INFP 3.2%	INTP 2.4%
ESTP 5.8%	ESFP 8.7%	ENFP 6.3%	ENTP 2.8%
ESTJ 10.4%	ESFJ 12.6%	ENFJ 2.8%	ENTJ 2.9%

Percentage of the UK population estimated to be in the four intuitive feeling types = 14.0%

(Source of these figures: Oxford Psychologists Press – UK distributor of the MBTI – personal communication with the researcher, Autumn 2000.)

4 MBTI data across Group 1 and 2

It has to be acknowledged that this is an unusual sample in that the dominant group are intuitive-feeling 'types' (NFs'). However, this style is probably consistent with the trainer and facilitator roles many undertook in their work and in their awareness for potential change involving people.

This is not a typical sample in that the majority are intuitives, and around two thirds are also intuitive-feeling types. A normal sample would have a more even split between the attitudes (extraversion - introversion), the functions (sensing - intuition, thinking - feeling) and between judging and perceiving. However intuitive-feeling types are associated with counselling, training, writing, and art common occupations in this sample (Myers and McCaulley 1985: p257).

The following two tables are presented to provide an indication of the spread of group 1 and 2 participants across the types. A detailed analysis of aspects of type will be presented in table A3.6.

Table A3.4: Group 1 - "The Early Starters" by MBTI Type Table:

'Agreed-type', or the type assessed by participants as accurate and applying to them has been used in this table.

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP *Writer/trainer / F / (2)* *Trainer / M / (11)* *Adv exec / M / (32)* *Writer / F / (39)*	INTP *Trainer / M / (19)*
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP *Trainer / M / (6)* *Architect etc / M / (15)* *Sculptor / F / (18)* *Vicar / M / (29)*	ENTP *Snr Mngr / F / (7)* *Teacher / M / (13)* *C. Ex. / M / (33)* *OD Consult. / M / (35)* *Trainer / F / (41)*
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ *Trainer / M / (24)* *Director / M / (31)* *Singer/teacher / F / (36)*	ENTJ *OD Consultant / F / (40)*

Table A3.5: Group 2 - the "Later Starters" by MBTI Type Table:

'Agreed-type', or the type assessed by participants as accurate and applying to them has been used in this table.

ISTJ Writer/Youth worker / M / (9)	ISFJ	INFJ Trainer / M / (22) Co. director / F / (27) Trainer / F / (28)	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP Trainer / M / (14)	INFP Composer / F / (1) Mng Director / M / (23) Trainer/writer / F / (38)	INTP Writer/mgt cons./ M / (4) Snr Mngr / M / (34)
ESTP	ESFP Counsellor / M / (3)	ENFP Trainer / M / (8) Youth leader/ M / (12) Psychotherapist / M / (30)	ENTP
ESTJ Trainer / M / (26)	ESFJ Trainer / F / (16) Trainer / F / (17)	ENFJ Trainer / M / (21) Psychotherapist / F / (25) Osteopath /teacher / M / (37)	ENTJ Trainer / F / (20)

Note: participant 10 did not complete the MBTI.

The relatively small number of participants across the 16 MBTI types means that these results will be examined primarily from perspective of 'quadrants' - the cluster of 4 types manifesting a particular perceiving and decision-making style, e.g. intutive-feeling types.

Table A3.6: Analysis of MBTI results in different function combinations:

(Note: participants will appear in more than one category.

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Extravert	**13**	(72%)	**11**	(50%)	**24**	(60%)	(6, 7, 13, 15, 18, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41.) (3, 8, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 30, 37.)
Introvert	**5**	(28%)	**10**	(45%)	**15**	(37.5%)	(2, 11, 19, 32, 39.) (1, 4, 9, 14, 22, 23, 27, 28, 34, 38.)
Sensing	**Nil**	-	**6**	(27%)	**6**	(15%)	(3, 9, 14, 16, 17, 26.)
Intuition	**18**	(100%)	**15**	(68%)	**33**	(82.5%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41.) (1, 4, 8, 12, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 34, 37, 38.)
Thinking	**7**	(39%)	**5**	(23%)	**12**	(30%)	(7, 13, 19, 33, 35. 40, 41.) (4, 9, 20, 26, 34.)
Feeling	**11**	(61%)	**16**	(73%)	**27**	(67.5%)	(2, 6, 11, 15, 18, 24, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39.) (1, 3, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 37, 38.)
Judging	**4**	(22%)	**11**	(50%)	**15**	(37.5%)	(24, 31, 36, 40.) (9, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37.)
Perceiving	**14**	(78%)	**10**	(45%)	**24**	(60%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 33, 35, 39, 41.) (1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 23, 30, 34, 38.)
Intuitive - Feeling Types (NF)	**11**	(61%)	**12**	(55%)	**23**	(57.5%)	(2, 6, 11, 15, 18, 24, 29, 31, 32, 36, 39.) (1, 8, 12, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 37, 38.)
Sensing Thinking Types (ST)	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	**2**	(5%)	(9, 26.)

Appendix 3 – Data and analysis from the Myers Briggs Type Indicator

	'Group 1'		'Group 2'		Total		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Sensing Feeling Types (SF)	**Nil**	-	**4**	(18%)	**4**	(10%)	(3, 14, 16, 17.)
Intuitive Thinking Types (NT)	**7**	(39%)	**3**	(14%)	**10**	(25%)	(7, 13, 19, 33, 35, 40, 41.) (4, 20, 34.)
Intuitive - Judging Types (N - J)	**4**	(22%)	**7**	(32%)	**11**	(27.5%)	(24, 31, 36, 40.) (20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 37.)
Intuitive - Perceiving Types (N - P)	**14**	(78%)	**8**	(36%)	**22**	(55%)	(2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 29, 32, 33, 35, 39, 41.) (1, 4, 8, 12, 23, 30, 34, 38.)
Extravert - Intuitive Types (E - N)	**13**	(72%)	**7**	(32%)	**20**	(50%)	(6, 7, 13, 15, 18, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41.) (8, 12, 20, 21, 25, 30, 37.)
Introverted - Intuitive Types (I - N)	**5**	(28%)	**8**	(36%)	**13**	(32.5%)	(2, 11, 19, 32, 39.) (1, 4, 22, 23, 27, 28, 34, 38.)
Extraverted - Sensing (E - S)	**Nil**	-	**4**	(18%)	**4**	(10%)	(3, 16, 17, 26.)
Introverted - Sensing (I - S)	**Nil**	-	**2**	(9%)	**2**	(5%)	(9, 14.)

5 Intuitive Types

Within the analysis contained in the above table the participant population fall primarily within the 'intuitive' half of the MBTI type table, and are 'intuitive types' (82.5% of the total participant population). While the groups are approximately balanced within the intuitive-feeling types, clear differences occur between group 1 and 2 with intuitive-thinking types (39% to 14%), and the connections between intuition and the perceiving continuum (78% to 36%), and extraversion and intuition (72% and 36%).

6 Intuitive Feeling Types

Nearly 60% of the overall participant group are 'intuitive-feeling' types. And over two thirds are feeling types (NF or SF). With this proportion involved, it suggests strongly that feeling-types, and intuitive-feeling types in particular, may be associated with 'influencing' creativity. The intuitive-feeling-perceiving style is associated with careers involving facilitation, such as trainers (Myers and McCaulley 1985: p257).

Kiersey (1998), offers the following descriptions occur of those displaying the intuitive-feeling functions:

> "... highly sensitive to the nuances of communication that qualify messages, the body language, facial expressions and voice inflections ..." (p122).

> "Acting in concert with others for the good of the group - co-operation - is considerably more important to (intuitive-feeling types) than the functional utility of their chosen tools and operations" (p123).

> "(the intuitive-feeling type's) first consideration is always to foster caring relationships ... their ideal is to help the people in their circle get along with each other, even care about each other, and thus work with each other for the good of all" (p123).

> "(the intuitive-feeling type's) become more diplomatic in working with people ... working in both ways, using their eye for possibilities to develop human potentials

and using their verbal fluency to mediate interpersonal conflicts." "(Their) eye is always focused on inclusion, not exclusion, on what gifts people can offer each other, not what walls divide them" (p124).

In describing roles in which intuitive-feeling types are often found working, Kiersey describes teacher, mentor, counsellor, advocates (for causes and individuals) (p126).

Kiersey describes the intuitive-feeling type as "Giving voice to views and positions, beliefs and causes - ideas that people often can't put into words for themselves - in order to nurture rapport and understanding between people."

(These descriptions are consistent with those contained in the MBTI manual, (e.g. Myers and McCaulley 1985: p28, 29 and 35).

The above descriptions of the intuitive-feeling (NF) style suggest that:

1. There is a strong relationship between the jobs Kiersey (1998), and Myers and McCaulley (1985) propose as common for intuitive-feeling types and the work found within this overall sample group.
2. While the descriptions that Kiersey offers of the priorities and working style of intuitive-feeling types are generalised, there would appear to be a close connection between these and the reports occurring within interview descriptions.
3. Kiersey's descriptions of the behaviours and values associated with this 'intutive-feeling' temperament are detailed - far more so than Gardner's description of the 'influencer' style of creativity. It would appear, however, that there is a potential connection in that Kiersey, like Gardner, uses Ghandi as a primary example of this way of functioning.

This is supported by various studies summarised in the MBTI manual which suggest that the NF profile is a common type among counsellors and consultants, i.e. among those that will use a facilitative and influencing role in their work. Thus, the NF dominance in this sample is consistent with the dominant occupations in this group and not unexpected in an influencing style of creativity.

7 Different 'Styles' Of Creativity Across 'Type'?

Given that the largest number of 'types' contained within this overall sample are in the intuitive feeling quadrant (nearly 60%), the conclusions available about differing styles of creativity across different 'types' will only be speculative.

Table A3.7 summarises the characteristics associated with each temperament.

Table A3.7: Priorities likely to be displayed by the differing type quadrants:

"Sensing Thinking"	"Sensing Feeling"	"Intuitive Feeling"	"Intuitive Thinking"
Focuses on: • The specifics. • The logical implications of these specifics. Values: • Acting responsibly. • Working with individuals who act responsibly.	Focuses on: • The specifics. • The impact of these specifics on people. Values: • Personal loyalty. • Working with individuals who personalise and individualise their contribution.	Focuses on: • The general concept or the big picture - not the specifics. • How the big picture impacts people or supports their values. Values: • Making a difference in the community, for the family in the world. • Working with individuals who help make his or her vision a reality.	Focuses on: • The general concept or the big picture - not the specifics. • How the big picture possibilities create logical options. Values: • Having options that fit his or her needs now and in the future. • Working with indiiduals who demonstrate competence.

(This table has been adapted from Brock 1994: p19.)

The interview reports obtained from participants were broadly consistent with the language styles and priorities described in this table. For example, 'thinking types' would commonly describe the factual, logical and working possibilities within a given context - and offer little, if any, observations on people impact. 'Sensing types' would generally talk in a manner focused on the 'here and now' rather than future possibilities - consistent with the type theory on this function.

These observations are not, however, consistent across the participant group. There were a number of individuals who said directly, or implied during feedback on the MBTI, that they believed they could equally skillfully display more than one type depending on context (e.g. in work or in their private lives). This perspective is not consistent with MBTI theory. MBTI theory argues that individuals have a preference for a particular way

of living and working and generally apply qualities associated with other types less skillfully. However, Csikszentmihalyi (1996 and 1997) observed that creative individuals can draw on different functions, like extraversion and introversion, according to the needs of their work and context. Over a quarter of participants reported behaviour consistent with this kind of flexibility (n = 11, 27.5%, participants = 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 29, 41.)

8 MBTI Results Across The Three Broad Occupational Categories

The following table illustrates MBTI results across the three broad occupational categories found in the participant population:

Table A3.8: MBTI analysis across the three broad occupational categories:

	Occ. Cat. 'A' (n=13)		**Occ. Cat. 'B' (n=17)**		**Occ. Cat. 'C' (n=10)**		Participant Nos.
	Nos	%	**Nos**	%	**Nos**	%	
Intuitive – Perceiving (N – P)	**8**	(62%)	**10**	(59%)	**4**	(40%)	(7, 12, 23, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35.) (2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19, 38, 41.) (1, 18, 30, 39.)
Intuitive – Judging (N – J)	**4**	(31%)	**4**	(24%)	**3**	(30%)	(27, 31, 37, 40.) (20, 21, 22, 24.) (25, 28, 36.)
Extraverted / Intuitive – Perceiving (E/N – P)	**5**	(38%)	**5**	(29%)	**2**	(20%)	(7, 12, 29, 33, 35.) (6, 8, 13, 15, 41.) (18, 30.)
Introverted / Intuitive – Perceiving (I/N – P)	**3**	(23%)	**5**	(29%)	**2**	(20%)	(23, 32, 34.) (2, 4, 11, 19, 38.) (1, 39.)
Extraverted / Intuitive – Judging (N – J)	**3**	(23%)	**3**	(18%)	**2**	(20%)	(31, 37, 40.) (20, 21, 24.) (25, 36.)
Introverted / Intuitive – Judging (N – J)	**1**	(8%)	**1**	(6%)	**1**	(10%)	(27.) (22.) (28.)